

THE CLARION

Newsletter of the Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir



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www.nelsonarion.org.uk
Registered Charity No 1116138

WINTER 2008

Chairman's View

At the end of 2007 the choir can look back on a very successful last quarter of the year, having performed in three of the most successful concerts I can remember.

Firstly, the Celebrity Concert (Frank's 40th Anniversary) at the end of October, was exceptionally well received by our audience and a DVD record of this successful occasion is still available.

Secondly, we were the guests of 'Amabile' at their Christmas Concert in Kendal Parish Church. You will find Duncan Reid's review of this event elsewhere in the 'Clarion', so suffice it to say that we did ourselves justice in our part of the proceedings, and Charlotte Jackson, the conductor of 'Amabile' said that she and her choir considered it a privilege to share the concert with us. High praise indeed!

Finally, our Christmas Cracker was particularly successful this year, with all the participants, including the Arion, being on top form.

The main blot on the landscape over the past three months was the untimely death of Peter Morris. There is an appreciation of Peter contained in this edition of the 'Clarion', so all I will say here is that the attendance of members, and past members, to sing at the funeral was in itself a recognition of the high regard in which Peter was held.



Peter Samuel Morris

Dates for your Diary

Sat 12th January 2008
In Concert at
Kelbrook Village Hall

Sat 9th February 2008
ANNUAL DINNER
Calf's Head - Worston

Sat 8th March 2008
In Concert with
Pendle Youth Choir
and
Pendle Children's Choir
St Johns Methodist Church
COLNE

Sat 19th April 2008
In Concert at
Padiham Unitarian Church
PADIHAM

Sat 26th April 2008
Steeton Centenary Concert
St George's Hall - Bradford
Massed Choirs with Brass Band

Sat 10th May 2008
Music in May
with
Craven Accordion Orchestra
St Thomas's - Barrowford

All concerts commence 7/30pm unless otherwise stated

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Peter with friends, in happier times...

Sadly missed

Peter Morris was the elder of two brothers whose father was the local 'bobby' in Sabden, an area renowned for its "treacle mines"!

Peter was always a very happy person who, during his working life was a lecturer in engineering at Accrington and Rossendale College.

Prior to this he served his time doing National Service where he became an instructor on AFV's (Armoured Fighting Vehicles). My association with REME (Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers) during a similar period of service often resulted in some very interesting conversations with Peter. This was usually during the times we caravanned together with Donald Simpson and Joe Spencer or whilst we were partaking in some liquid refreshment at a local hostelry.

I was first introduced to Peter and Cynthia Morris by Marianne & Bill Lonsdale (my old rugby 'mucker') in the mid sixties. But it wasn't until I became a member of Nelson Arion Male Voice Choir in 1980, that our friendship developed.

As a former member of Pendle Opera and Burnley Light Opera, singing was something that Peter will long be remembered for. His fine Baritone voice will be a lasting memory to all choir members both past and present. "If I Were A Rich Man", "Because I Was Shy" and "Love Changes Everything" were just a few of his renditions that pleased members and audiences alike.

Arion members will sadly miss Peter together with many other people from different groups and organisations with whom he had close associations

*Words, however kind
can't mend your heartache
but those who care and
share your loss, wish you
comfort and piece of mind.
May you find strength
in the love of family
and in the warm embrace
of friends.*

We extend our deepest sympathy to Cynthia, David, Andrew & families Ed

Music In May

Our Music in May concert on the 10th May 2008, features the Craven Accordion Orchestra.

The Arion Choir have taken this opportunity to give support to the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) who provide riding to improve the general health and well being of people of all ages with disabilities.

Judy Olby is a Trustee and Chairman of the Otley & District Riding for the Disabled Association and in May 2007 organised a holiday for 11 advanced riders concentrating on 'dressage'. Three of these adults were riders who had disabilities resulting from accidents. Riding has given them friendship, motivation, and fulfilment. All of them made new friends & improved their riding skills.

During the summer the Association had 11 children aged 10 to 17 from Scotland and the South Coast and most Westerly Wales!! They were brilliant and gelled together as a big family. Most of these riders are in mainstream schools where their abilities are lost in academic pressure. Wonderful young people, full of determination and fun.

It was in September 2007 that, along with my wife Barbara and Pam & John Taylor (Arion pianist), we were asked by Mary West (Arion Patron) to help provide evening meals for eleven disabled riders and their carers during a week's holiday in West Yorkshire. They were based at Beamsley Chapel near Bolton Abbey where the wonderful facilities cater admirably for the needs of disabled people.

As the riders arrived back from their day's activity with their carers, it was a pleasure to see the many smiling faces as they passed by the kitchen where their evening meal was being prepared. We were invited to join them during their evening activity of community singing and watch and listen to their special 'party pieces', be it gymnastic exercises or singing their own special songs. It really was wonderful to see such attention being provided for the needs of people who are far less fortunate in life than most.



Judy Olby has five children of her own, the youngest of whom had a brain haemorrhage at a very early age. Peter was left disabled, but despite the upbringing and needs of her other children, Judy from that point gave all her available time to helping disabled people.

Age does not come into the equation. Judy has passed her 70th birthday and continues to dedicate her life to do all she can to help this worthy cause. Kathryn Wheelock (a rider from Otley RDA) hopes to represent Ireland in the paralympics. Now that would be special wouldn't it? What a pleasure it was to meet Judy Olby – a truly remarkable lady.

When the Arion Choir were asked if they would do a concert to provide financial support for the disabled, the response was unanimous. You see, there are a number of Arion Members who 'come from over the border' and it is only fair that the charities the Arion are able to support come from both Lancashire and Yorkshire. Your generous support will be very much appreciated. **Ed**

PS Beamsley Chapel Project was the name given to a building which was designed to provide self catering holiday accommodation to facilitate the needs of any disabled person. To anyone who has never heard of this project, it is a fascinating story which will be featured in future editions of the Clarion. **Ed**

An Arion Chorister

During the dark days of 1926, the year of the General Strike, a boy was born. His mother attended Church regularly; his father found his God in the allotment. He was baptised at his Church and attended Sunday School from his 3rd year until at the age of 9 he joined Cubs & Scouts.

One evening at the age of 12 he was singing around a campfire with his friends, when his then Vicar said loudly "that voice is for my Church Choir".

From the age of 12 to 14 he sang happily along with 11 other small boys and 12 male singers, (no women in those days).

Choir practises were held on Wednesday & Thursday evenings and one hour on Saturday morning for music tuition.

At the age of 12 he was confirmed by the then Bishop of Blackburn. His voice broke two years later at the age of 14. He thought this was the end of his singing career but not so. He was seconded to the Male Alto section until his adult voice settled into a natural Tenor some two years later.

During the war he spent two years in the army, singing in concert parties and pantomimes whilst always returning to his church when on leave.

At the end of the war he returned to his Church to make music and was married in 1950, still continuing to make his music with local Operatic Societies. 1978 was the year he joined the Arion, (the best decision he ever made). He has been presented with Church Music Awards for 40, 50 and 60 years of service to the RSCM. On January 19th 2008 the Bishop at Blackburn Cathedral will honour him for 70 years continuous service.

GUESS WHO?

Letters

Great concert on Saturday (Christmas Cracker) we all enjoyed it very much.

Freckleton Band were very good and the Arden Youth Choir were outstanding.

What can I say about the Choir? - You were on top form, thank you.

**Marjery Payne - Group Organiser
Briercliffe**

A big thank you to you all for coming over to Kendal last night. The girls and I enjoyed your performance very much and your visit was, I am sure, a big draw for the audience.

It was a privilege to sing with you. Thank you.

Yours

Charlotte (Amabile Girls Choir)

Thank you very much for forwarding the DVD so promptly. It was well worth the wait - we enjoyed it immensely. Frank mentioned in his introduction the many famous musicians who had been invited to the Muni in the past. I still lived in Nelson at that time and saw them all. It prompted us to reminisce about other notable events we enjoyed. There was a big occasion at Nelson & Colne College, which was the centenary celebration. Not to be forgotten in 1986 was the Radio Wales Choir of the Year competition. We went to Llandudno with the choir for one of the rounds. I taped all the rounds broadcast on the radio. As I write this letter, I am listening to the final in Cardiff against Llanelli. Known then as Nelson Arion Glee Union Male Voice Choir, you won by 143 marks to 136.

Frank has been and continues to be an inspiration for his musicianship, his energy and stamina. We also admire John's irreplaceable contribution as accompanist.

We'll treasure the DVD for many years to come.

**Ann & Peter Schofield
Shawforth, Rochdale**

In Concert At Kendal Parish Church

The Arion travelled to the Parish Church at Kendal on Thursday 6th Dec 2007 for the return leg of a joint concert with the award winning girls choir Amabile. Those who endured the journey (it was raining stair rods) would have been rewarded by an enjoyable concert in a beautiful setting on the banks of the river Kent. Amabile is really a collective name for three choirs, Piccolo Amabile for pre-school ages, Poco for primary school and the main choir with a fourth one on the way for women which will debut in January. At the time of preparing this report, Amabile were due to appear as a finalist in the televised Sainsbury's Choir Of The Year Competition

One cannot help thinking that this production line approach to singing could benefit the Arion as the cradle to grave system must produce a well trained chorister. In fact we did emulate the idea in our Centenary year when the Arion boys' choir was founded as a feeder for the mens' but the weakness in the model was exposed as boy's voices break and at this point they go off and do other things often, never to return which was the demise of our junior effort. The girls do not suffer the same vocal indignity and so continuity can be more certain and the result is a competition winning choir of technical excellence and a maturity beyond the age of its individual members. The downside, if any criticism is justified, is that it makes for a rather "battery powered" end result and add this to a program heavily laden with Rutter at his most sublime and you end up with a concert which is good but not sufficiently entertaining for Christmas. The Arion could never be accused of being cloned and although mostly at the grave end of things rather than cradle can still entertain when on form. The first half items were secular and Ken Burgess again rose to the occasion as the hapless waiter Leopold singing "Goodbye." The second half Christmas music included "Joy to the World" and I think we brought a little joy to a very appreciative Kendal audience. D R