

CHOIR NEWS JUNE 2018

.....so the 17th April came and went but no ABC (see last choir news) this time. A disappointment but not a disaster. It's always a privilege to sing in places such as Canterbury where they treat visiting choirs with warmth, and value the effort we put in. I'd contrast that with Westminster Abbey, where I sang with another choir on Boxing Day and we were given neither a piano in the rehearsal room, nor a cup of tea at our break. And then we were criticised for not reaching the standard required. Strange that, given that we had sung there a few months earlier and they liked us enough to immediately offer us the Boxing Day slot. I takes some understanding.

I apologise that once again I have nothing much to say about Bledlow Choir. Truth is we have been on a break since Canterbury and don't meet again for our next rehearsal until 9 May.

Personally, I have had a busy April singing at Canterbury twice, Birmingham and St Albans, all in the space of ten days. Singing for me has been a retirement project and one which I had expected to be somewhat less expensive than pastimes which I pursued as a younger man, especially flying and sailing which used to run out at about £100 ph and £100 pd respectively. I have only myself to blame but in recent weeks this has not been the case. First on the train to Birmingham, where the choir might have booked its own carriage, so many of us were there on the 8.27 from Risborough (change at Banbury) the ticket inspector was not satisfied with a cursory glance of my 'Senior Railcard' peeping out of my wallet. No, she wanted to see the whole thing. Oh my goodness, it had expired in July 2017. My profuse apologies cut no ice. It was an innocent mistake. I had no recollection of receiving a reminder to renew and what's more I must have used it several times since last July (implied: why hadn't this been spotted by the Chiltern Rail staff before today?). 'Ah, so you admit to defrauding the railway on a number of occasions' were her next words. Time to stop talking on my part. Consequence was tickets and railcard (expired) confiscated and full price return fare paid on the spot. Total cost around £75.

And then as if to trump that, a week after Bledlow's appearance at Canterbury I received a letter from the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire informing me that I had been clocked on the M25 exceeding a variable speed sign. Aha, so that was why TomTom was making so many beeps, I must read the booklet that came with it. Oh dear. Mitigating circumstances that will not be accepted did not (deliberate double negative) include 'I had been singing at Canterbury Cathedral and was unsettled by the fact that I missed an entry in the Gibbons Nunc Dimittis'. Somehow I don't suppose that will sway it if I go before the bench. Another £100 down the drain. Mind you, I understand from a number of friends that the Speed Awareness Course is really very interesting. They sympathise having been caught themselves. 'Keep you chin up' they say. 'Which one?' I ponder.

More next month.....

Mike Beattie

Tenor, scribe and promoter of the 100 Club

bigmike.beattie@gmail.com

Monday, 30 April 2018