

## CHOIR NEWS - MARCH 2018

Each time I sit down to write my piece for the Messenger, I think that the blank screen is just like my mind: a blank.

Then, gradually, inspiration creeps in and finding five hundred words becomes a challenge that I cannot shirk. Next, with luck, words start to flow, sentences form and themes develop that, with luck, engage the reader. But in the way of modern overkill, anything that I can possibly write about is already covered elsewhere, especially on the parish website. I also keep an eye on the word counter at the bottom of my laptop screen and rejoice that it increases inexorably as I tap away at the keyboard (there, I've written 132 words and said nothing of any consequence).

Sadly, the period after Christmas is rather quiet. Looking around the choir at rehearsal, it's great to see that the altos have increased by 20% since Sam Turner joined. Welcome. The sops, on the other hand are in relative decline, although naturally they still sound marvellous. Tenors and basses remain steady in number, limited as we are by the size of the benches in the back row of the choir stalls.

If you heard us sing Purcell's 'Rejoice in the Lord Alway', I hope that you liked it. The pressure was all on the soloists, Sarah (alto), Derek (tenor) and Greg (bass). The rest of us had a mere ten words to learn, which we had to repeat a few times. Easy-peasy really (257 words done now). Well done the trio, though.

We are currently rehearsing Orlando Gibbons, Short Service for a planned evensong at Portsmouth Cathedral on 31 March. However, this has now been cancelled by Portsmouth who will have an Easter vigil instead. The Gibbons is not easy, especially as virtually every bar contains a different number of beats. That structure wasn't covered in my grade 5 exam and doesn't appeal to the retired accountant in me.

Speaking of evensongs, I think we may be about to sing one for St Paul's in Bledlow Ridge. The back ground is that a few years ago we were offered their choir robes as the choir there had disbanded. The price included singing an evensong for them. Somehow we never did it. But hear on the Bledlow Ridge grapevine that they haven't forgotten, and that their new rector is keen on calling in the debt. So maybe instead of Portsmouth Cathedral, we will travel up the hill to the Ridge.

My recruitment of members to the 100 Club got off to a good start and as I write, fifty-seven people have renewed from last year. If you are one of those who intends to, but hasn't yet done so, please email me at the address below so that I can count you in. Payment can follow any time up to 15<sup>th</sup> March The first draw will be in March so there is not much time. And as I never tire of explaining, the 100 Club funds the choir so that it is not a drain on parish resources, and pays out three prizes each quarter to the lucky winners. So Please, Please, Please join or re-join. The full rules are on the website.

So there you are, that's our news for this month. More of the same next month. Thanks for reading.

Mike Beattie

Scribe, tenor, promoter of the 100 Club

P.S. in case you are counting, this is 579 words

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