

Everyone, except those who sadly were not there, will have fond memories of 11th June and Bledlow's Queen's Birthday celebrations: street party, competitions, car show, and the Choir concert at Holy Trinity.

The final rehearsal was a straight run-through with Jeff unflustered by our mistakes: it would be all right on the night.

Jeff says "no one will die if you make a mistake".

We sang to a full church, perhaps 150-200 people. A highpoint was Kerry Byrne hitting all her solo notes bang in the middle in Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer" ("Oh For the Wings"), floating more like an angel than a dove: too long for a church service, but great for a concert. Holst's Cornish folk song, tricky in rehearsal, succeeded on the night.

Ralph Westby sang Moon River with great feeling. "Mrs Beamish" raised laughs, as did choir members singing and dancing the Hokey Kokey by Kraftwerk

My friend said he enjoyed it more than he expected. I'm not sure what that meant.

On 3 July we sang at Saunderton Church. There was no chance until the day to rehearse. This was because our organist Cynthia was prevented from arriving at the rehearsal by an overturned offal lorry on the M40, a sad and ironic fate for a vegetarian. The service was lovely.

The choir sang at the American Cathedral in Paris on 7th August. I could not go, so Greg Moore's report follows.

"The American Cathedral in Paris was taken over by the Brits on Sunday 7 August when the Rector of St Mary le Bow, George R Bush, presided over the 11.00am Holy Eucharist together with our "tiny village" choir and the 'celebrated' Cynthia Hall. The Cathedral's tradition allows for a Choral Prelude as a lead-in to the service. Kelly's "Rejoice, The Lord is King!" woke up the 70 or so in the congregation (including a dog) before the reflective Oculi Omnium by Wood. The haunting phrases of MacMillan's A New Song heralded the Organ Voluntary and the first of the hymns. An hour later the service ended after we had led the congregation in another three hymns. Together with Psalm 33, the Sanctus, Song of Praise (a last minute change to the Gloria), a sung Prayer, and another four anthems/motets, the choir had sung 15 pieces of music.

"Unusually the collection was taken during an Offertory Anthem – Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence by Bairstow (an old classic but a first for the choir) with its resounding Alleluias. The eight part harmony worked well for a choir of 15. After communicating with George Bush we sang three unaccompanied motets at the back of the Cathedral. Vittoria's Jesu Dulcis Memoria, Bryd's Sacerdotes Domini (a late morning addition) and Champion's four verse poetic prayer View me Lord arranged by Lloyd. Jeff led the music with his usual poise and purpose, bringing out the meaning of the words. Thanks to him as ever, to Cynthia, who gained a well-deserved round of applause, and our faithful supporters who brought the sun with them, and basked in the gloriousness and friendliness of it all."