

## Choir Notes

With all the excitement and demands of the festive season well behind us, January and February can often seem a bit bleak, with the evenings still dark and the weather challenging, bank balances and waistlines are still recovering and, for most, those new year's resolutions have been long abandoned.

Perhaps one of those resolutions was to try something new? Do more things that make you happy? Learn a new skill or revive an old one, or perhaps just to get out and meet more people? You could of course achieve all of these things by just joining a choir.

Our local area is blessed with many different choirs, so there is definitely one out there for you. From church choirs, rock choirs, school community choirs (which draw their members from anyone connected with the school, including, but not limited to pupils, teachers, parents, grandparents and carers), choral societies and village choirs, all singing music of a very high standard and all different types of music from Bach to the Beatles and Christmas carols to Coldplay - there is really so much variety on offer.

The majority of local choirs do not require an audition, nor do you need to be able to read music; they are wonderful friendly places where once a week, a group of people (who would often not have met otherwise) all come together to share a combined enjoyment of singing and harmony and produce a sound which is so much more than the sum of its parts!

For those who would love to join a choir but just cannot spare the time once a week (usually just term times), there are one off 'Come and Sing' events held regularly, where you can just join a group of like-minded people for one day, a number of pieces are learnt and then performed at the end of the day. It is hugely enjoyable and a great toe in the water if you are not sure it is going to be for you.

The benefits of singing have been well publicised in the media, but there are many intangible benefits of singing in a group. If you think that you might be interested in joining a choir, a quick Google search will bring up lists of choirs in the local area, or check out the BBC website 'find a choir' link <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sing/findachoir.shtml>.

Joining Bledlow Church Choir was my new year's resolution a couple of years ago and I have not had a moment's regret. You don't have to live in Bledlow either - one of our altos currently lives in Glasgow and manages to join us seamlessly for Christmas services and 'on tour' throughout the year - much to the delight of the rest of the Altos!

So for anyone tempted to come and give Bledlow Church Choir a go this year, we have a jam-packed programme of events that has been planned for us by Jeff. As well as the regular monthly services, we will also be singing at Coventry Cathedral in April, The American Cathedral in Paris in June and we have been invited back to sing at St Paul's Cathedral in September. Jeff was heard to comment that he thought one of the pinnacles of Bledlow Church Choir's achievements was being invited to sing at St Paul's (January 2019), but he subsequently realised that the greater achievement is actually being asked back!

It's great fun, give it a go.

The choir sang at the Candlemas communion at Saunderton on the wonderfully palindromic 2<sup>nd</sup> February (02/02/2020). I am not sure if many were aware that the *Agnus Dei* was composed by Jeff, and the *Nunc Dimittis* by Statham. It is a rarely sung version, and has a solo soprano lead which Deb sang with great confidence. We look forward to singing the *Magnificat* in April.

**Sam Turner (Alto)**