

The Choir sang at two services at Holy Trinity this month, and continued practising for the Queen's Birthday concert on 11 June.

The Taizé service on 24 April was a new experience, and we did not know what to expect. The music was easy, but required stamina, as each piece was repeated eight times like a mantra. It is difficult to know what effect one is having, as the singer cannot know how the song is perceived by the listener. The choir was unusually at the side of the nave, not in the chancel, so we mounted a flank attack, rather than the usual frontal assault. Whether our efforts augmented the spirituality of the occasion is hard for us as singers to judge, but I hope we succeeded, as the service was moving, especially the fine readings translated into several languages including Russian, which I loved, as so strange.

I went to Evensong at Corpus Christi College in Oxford the next weekend, and found the introit was "If you love me" by Thomas Tallis, and the anthem was "Blessed be the God and Father", by Samuel Wesley, both sung in the past by Bledlow Choir.

The Corpus chapel is out of use for restoration, so the choir is singing in the University Church of St Mary the Virgin: the chancel is lit by large clear windows which flooded the church with golden evening light.

The Tallis was calm and meltingly lovely. A benefit of singing is appreciation of the music you have sung, when sung by others. I hope the sound Bledlow makes has the same effect the Corpus choir had on me. They were young and sang with great enthusiasm. I just hope that when we sing "if you love me" the congregation feels the peace ("peace" not "piece"). It is fun singing, but it is great listening to others sing what you know well.

We get feedback about our singing from time to time, sometimes too spontaneous just to be polite. We went to a Cathedral (Worcester?), where the priest spoke to Jeff after the service, and the conversation went like this: –

Priest: "where are you from?"

Jeff: "Bledlow".

Priest: "where is that?"

[Jeff describes Bledlow, its location, and size.]

Priest [clearly startled by his revelations]: "Gosh, that is amazing, you don't expect singing like that from a small village choir".

Jeff: "Well, there's nothing else to do in Bledlow".

Choral Matins on 8 May was just after Ascension Day, and the anthem was "God is Gone Up, with a Merry Noise", the title being a pretty full description of the piece, by William Croft (1678-1727) as the only words tell us that God is going up with a merry noise, and the sound of the trumpet.

We sang Stanford's Te Deum and Jubilate, both glorious for Ascension.

Gerald Fowler was back after illness absence, and it was lovely to have him singing with us again.