

CHOIR NEWS- SEPTEMBER 2014

After what seems like an age, I have the chance to report on our visit to the American Cathedral, Paris where we sang the communion service on Sunday 13th July. The architect of the cathedral was George Edmund Street an English gothic revivalist whose other work included the Royal Courts of Justice in London and the restoration of Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin and who was at one time architect to the Diocese of Oxford, It is a rather lovely building situated in one of the best streets in Paris, close to the Arc de Triomphe.

In the preceding weeks, there had been a flurry of emails within the choir discussing travel options, including the hire of a coach. But personal preferences, the opportunity to extend the stay, and the fact that we were in different hotels all over the French capital made that impossible, and so far as I know, we all travelled by Eurostar, most arriving by Friday evening.

On Saturday we had time off until 5pm, when we practised in the Cathedral for over two hours. Just as well for me that it wasn't earlier in the afternoon, as I didn't finish lunch until after 4pm! Quelle horreur! After practice, we followed Matthew the Scot into the Champs-Elysees where he had booked a group table at that most Franco/Belge of restaurants, known to trenchermen the world over, Leons. A splinter group of gourmands went elsewhere. You have to like your food to make the best of Paris, and I do.

Sunday dawned wet but there was no time off as practice was at 9am and with the service at 10.45. Those Americans like their music. We seemed to be on our feet for hours. Sydney Campbell, Byrd, Monteverdi, four hymns, a psalm, a Gloria and a Sanctus were all rehearsed, rehearsed again and then sung. It was all over by half past twelve.

It went well; we knew it, Jeff said it, the clergy said it and the congregation said it. Friends of mine in Paris who came to hear us were impressed. Let's say we got the feeling that we will be asked back.

Most people returned by Eurostar later that day. Some including me stayed an additional night or two. Monday 14th was Bastille Day when the French have a huge parade and fly past by the military in the Champs-Elysees. By then the weather had improved.

Another great Cathedral visit by the Bledlow Choir, our first overseas had come to an end. As always, our profound thanks go to Jeff Stewart, our choirmaster and Cynthia Hall, our organist, for all their work in organising and preparing us.

Our next Cathedral is Hereford, about which, more at a later date.

THE BLEDLOW 100 CLUB

In July the draw moved to the Peacock to make way for the Bledlow Belles who had taken over the Lions for the evening. We drew prizes for July and August and redrew June and the winners were

June – Gerard Beattie (my brother)

July – Kip Manning

August – Les Owen

Well done to all of you.

The September draw will be on 18th in the Lions at about 9.30pm

The 100 Club has been a great way for us to finance the cost of the choir. For 2015 I am considering some changes, the most significant of which would be to move onto a quarterly basis with first, second and third prizes each quarter. What I can do is directly related to how many members we have, but if the number of members remains the same, the first prize would be around £230, the second £154 and the third £77. Let me know your views by email to: mike.beattie@jmbt.co.uk

Until the next time....

Mike Beattie
1 August 2014