

CHOIR NEWS JANUARY 2016

This month the Choir sang at Risborough Station on 11th December; at Alice and Bradley's wedding on 12th December, at the Carol Service at Saunderton on 19th December, and on Christmas Day at Bledlow.

The Wedding

We sang Purcell's *If you love me* and Rutter's *Gaelic Blessing* while the register was signed. I like Purcell. Were I walking down a country lane, and saw an ancient curious lamp, I would rub it, and pouf! a genie would appear, and offer three wishes. I would wish for (1) transformation into a contralto opera diva; and (2) a chance to sing Dido's Lament on a world stage to a sorrowing audience, wiping tears from their eyes as I sang; and (3) the chance to do it again. I would then expire happy, murmuring "Remember me! Remember me!"

Christmas

Christmas! How many times have I sung *O Come all Ye Faithful* this year? And *Hark the Herald Angels sing*? And do I still love them? Yes!

Singing is about performance. We practice in the Church (not too cold this year). We can sing most of the music to a degree from the page, but that is not the same as understanding and knowing it by practice. Leading must be frustrating, as there are few important rules, but choristers forget them all the time. The rules are: to learn the music in advance; to look up when singing, so the sound travels out, rather than through the floor; to watch the Leader; to open one's mouth wide; to understand the words; and to let yourself go (Jeff: "there are no limits"). Simple, but difficult.

Risborough Station

Our first carols were at Risborough Railway Station, collecting for Rennie Grove Hospice at Home. The generous public donated £232.02, as they whizzed by on their way home, despite hearing little as the trains were loud, and did not muffle for the Choir.

Carol Service

If we keep to the rules, the performance can be magical, as was *O Magnum Mysterium* by the Spanish Tomas Luis de Victoria (1548 - 1611), contemporary with Shakespeare (1564 - 1616). This was mostly reflective, perhaps the three Kings reflecting on Jesus' birth, but the Shepherds come back at the end for a rousing clog dance.

We also sang *Tu Scendi Dalle Stelle*, an Italian Carol in Italian (tricky), and *Carol of the Bells*, Ukrainian, but sung in English (phew!).

After the service the Choir was invited to a party at Cathy and Derek Stone's house, for which we all thank them.

Christmas Day

More carols. Lovely! More Ding Dong and Merriment on High. The anthem was *Infant Holy*, a Polish carol set by David Willcocks, who sadly died in September. Christmas music would be far more difficult without his "Carols for Choirs".

The Future

We practise for our visit to Coventry Cathedral on February 20th -21st. Do come! Please remember to (re)join our 100 Club, if you haven't got round to it in the busy time before Christmas.