

Choir News

The Choir sang on Remembrance Sunday at Bledlow, and at the Advent service in Saunderton.

Remembrance Sunday

Leaders of various churches at different times and places have banned music as distracting from the liturgy, but music enhances the words. The reading of the names of the Bledlow dead from the First World War was followed by the Last Post, played on trumpet by Sally Corcoran. This touches us, like pressing a button, to think of the sadness of all those men who died before they could raise children themselves, and missed life's greatest pleasures in the cold and mud of France.

The Remembrance service featured solemn music, including "Remember Not, Lord, Our Offences" (*Henry Purcell*) and "For the Fallen" (*Jeffrey Stewart*). The music reflected our respect for the memory of all those who have died in wars, the sadness of war, our desire for peace, and pity that despite that desire, wars still happen continually around the world.

Advent

The Advent service pulled together all the elements needed for perfection including a cheerful and engaged congregation, a wonderful choice of music with rousing hymns, and varied music from the Choir with a vast contrast between the gloomy "Remember, Oh Thou Man" through the lighter "A Tender Shoot" (the reference in it to Isaiah difficult for the Choir to follow as in the music each syllable is separated, looking like "I is a [elephant/ porpoise/ macaque monkey]"), before the revelry of Brewer's Magnificat in D, all held together by Jeff supported by the amazing musicianship of Cynthia playing the organ, and kept humming along by our wonderful vicar Jennifer. Just lovely throughout.

There are so many settings of the Magnificat, by so many famous composers, all with different approaches and emotional responses to the text, that it is endlessly surprising what turns up. This was the Virgin Mary as a real woman turning triumphant cartwheels for joy in Judaea, building to a great crescendo, starting at forte with short quieter interludes building to fortissimo. Thrilling? In spades! And Jeff should consider a parallel career as a jockey, as he knows how to pace his horse, and just when to kick it to make it fly.

Thank you to Katherine and Michael Berman for having us to their house after the service. It was a great party, and much appreciated by us all.

Choir Members

We said goodbye this month to Gillian Carr (Soprano), who has moved to Dorset (Sad!) but still works locally, so may be able to come and sing sometimes (Hurrah!); and hello to Becky Miller (Soprano)(Hurrah!), who has sung with the Choir before, so she must have liked it; so a one-all draw on numbers overall.

Coming events

Christmas will hopefully be a time of peace, but unfortunately perhaps not total peace in the run up, as our leader Jeff struggles to inculcate the Carol of the Bells by Leontovych into our heads in time for the carol service on 20 December. I think he will succeed, as he always does, and he likes a challenge.

Another date is the Choir's visit to Coventry, where we are singing on the weekend of 20/21st February: it is lovely on tour to have home supporters with us.

The Bledlow 100 club November prize was won by Mary Uglow, and we thank her and all our supporters for participation in the Club. Mike is now collecting subscriptions for the coming year, and please do continue to participate, as the club helps the Choir succeed (we could be stuck without it!).