

On 11 August we prepare at our practice for Simon Dobson's wedding to his fiancée Vicki the following Saturday. Simon is the son of Debbie, a soprano in the choir.

The pieces to be sung for the signing of the register are well-known, Rutter's "A Gaelic Wedding" and Faure's "Pie Jesu". These just need Jeff's finishing touches, and he evidently feels confident that we will do them well on the day because after a brief rehearsal, he announces we will sing "Blessed be the God and Father" by Samuel Wesley, not for a performance, but for fun, the chorister's equivalent of a sea-angler catching a three pound mackerel, or a gourmet finding a truffle. We roar the song out in private to no audience with great enthusiasm but less skill, as we haven't sung it for a long time. Blessings on our fine, kind and generous choirmaster for such a treat.

Then on the Saturday, the wedding. We have the usual pre-performance half-hour run through, with final points which we can hope to retain in mind when the service follows immediately after. Jeff suddenly accuses us basses of looking miserable, which is a not infrequent complaint. Happy singers sound better, so the point is important. I look round, and we remind me of Rodin's sculpture of the six Burghers of Calais, who after a siege of over a year in which the citizens were reduced to eating rats, if they could find them, and in which plague-infected corpses were slung over the battlements in early germ warfare, leave the town with nooses ready around their necks to give themselves up to Kind Edward III, as they think for execution.

But I am not miserable, just worried at realising I have completely forgotten since Thursday how Pie Jesu goes or what the first note is. Misery and worry look similar, but both probably worsen the singing, so I must practice grinning at all times like a Cheshire Cat.

Then the Wedding starts. The weather is glorious. The bride enters through the West Door, and walks to the head of the nave, where the choir can see well the moment when the bride meets the groom, the first of many glorious moments in a wedding service. The music is fine, and we all enjoy playing a part in making the day a special one. Afterwards the choir is fed on cakes and sparkling wine, and goes home happy.

Then we have an hiatus while Jeff takes a well earned rest, so there is no further news for this month. We can all look forward to restarting our rehearsals on 15<sup>th</sup> September, after this copy has gone to print. Let's hope the choir hasn't forgotten over the summer how to sing.