



Warm welcome for Abbey bravehearts

On Saturday 9 January, despite icy roads and freezing temperatures, some 70 people ventured out to attend the Friends of Romsey Abbey Choir's annual Epiphany Supper. Held in the Abbey's Church Rooms, the event raises funds for the choir's singing holiday, which in August takes it to Newcastle, Hexham and Carlisle cathedral, tying in with a sponsored walk along Hadrian's Wall being organised by George's Trust.

Fittingly, this year's theme was 'Bonnie Scotland' and those attending were piped in by choir mum Jean Martin. She and fellow mums and wives laid on a hearty stew followed by a choice of desserts including chocolate bread and butter pudding and raspberry cranachan – a confection of oatmeal, raspberries, whisky, honey and whipped cream.

Joe O'Brien, who is organising the sponsored walk in memory of his son George, both acted as MC for the entertainment that followed and contributed several items to it, including a poem by W.H. Auden imagining life as a soldier on Hadrian's Wall and a hilarious parody of *Scotland the Brave*.

Joseph Yandell and Simon Grant, boys in the choir, performed vocal and piano solos and, later, all the boys sang pieces including Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Pie Jesu*, *Butterflies and moths* by Andrew Carter and John Rutter's *Star Carol*. The full choir rounded off the evening in style with Ian Wicks' up-tempo arrangement of *We three Kings*. Ticket sales and the well-supported raffle raised nearly £600.



The Editor writes...

As I write, we are already half-way through Epiphany, with Lent and Easter music just starting to appear on our practice schedule. We enjoyed singing to full congregations at all of the major Christmas services. All of the soloists deserve special thanks for their contributions, notably Julian Orchard (*Once in Royal David's City*), and Simon Grant (Stanford's Magnificat in G) during the Nine Lessons and Carols service, and Georgie Wyatt (*In the bleak Midwinter*), on Christmas morning.

Last term was extremely busy, with extra demands including the George's Trust Concert in the Park, Choral Evensong with the choirs of Sherborne Abbey and Christchurch Priory, and the farewell service for the Bishop of Southampton. We learned music including the *Missa Brevis* by William Mathias and Stanford's motet for All Souls, *Iustorum animae*.

We are grateful, as ever, to choir parents for all their support in bringing choristers to practices and services – and to those who cater for us so expertly at teas and the Epiphany Supper.

Musicians unite in memory of George

On 25 September, we and the Romsey Area Youth Jazz gave a concert in the Memorial Park. It began in pleasant late evening sunshine at 6 pm with Adrian Batten's ebullient Tudor anthem, *O sing joyfully*.

We gave a flavour of the breadth of our repertoire, taking in, motets by Anton Bruckner, César Franck and Maurice Duruflé, and anthems by Bainton and Ireland.

Darkness had well and truly

fallen in time for the grand finale: a lusty rendition of *Zadok the Priest* and Parry's *Jerusalem*, accompanied by fireworks.



When online, don't forget...

Join our *Facebook* group (search on-site for Romsey Abbey Choir), follow us at twitter.com/abbeychoir and please shop via [easyfundraising!](#)

Three choirs unite for All Saints



On Sunday 8 November, the choirs of Christchurch Priory and Sherborne Abbey braved dismal weather to join us in singing Choral Evensong. A 150-strong congregation attended the service, which began with 40 boys and 36 men processing in a column that extended the full length of the nave.

After the hymn, *Judge eternal, throned in splendour*, and the Preces by Humphrey Clucas, we gave a spirited account of Psalm 46, which included two soaring descants.

The *Magnificat* from Thomas Attwood-Walmisley's Evening Service in D minor alternated thundering verses for unison basses and tenors with consoling passages for trebles and altos that led into a solo quartet at the words 'He remembering his mercy'. The *Nunc Dimittis* continued the drama, building to an apparently rousing conclusion before coming to rest quietly, even enigmatically.

John Ireland's anthem *Greater love hath no man than this: than that a man lay down his life for his friend* was a poignant choice for Remembrance Sunday. Solos were sung confidently by trebles from Christchurch and Sherborne and one of our baritones, Jon Sketchley.

Tim Sledge preached on how teamwork, whether on the sports field or the battlefield, inspires great acts of selflessness. The service concluded with the rousing hymn *Crown him with many crowns*.

Hugh Morris, Christchurch's Organist remarked afterwards: 'We haven't sung 'away' for a few years, so it was great to be invited to this service in Romsey. We look forward to strengthening our links with Romsey and Sherborne in future.'

Girls' Choir news from Daphne Lindsay

The Autumn term started with the amazing news that Head Chorister Georgie Wyatt had been selected out of over 2,000 entries as the reserve finalist for the BBC2 Young Chorister of the Year 2009: a huge achievement

Knowing that she would only be able to sing if one of the four finalists was unable to do so was quite frustrating for Georgie but she worked really hard, preparing Mozart's *Laudate Dominum*, in the hope that she would sing in the final at St. Paul's Cathedral on 23rd October.

Family and friends travelled to London and, even though she did not get the chance to perform, we all enjoyed the evening and the VIP reception afterwards. Another positive outcome of the evening was an invitation from Andrew Lumsden to sing an evensong with the Girls' Choir of Winchester Cathedral.

On All Saints' Day, the girls were joined by our back row of gentlemen. Singing at the Remembrance Day service, and at Bishop Paul's farewell service were both enjoyable. The Christingle service was, as always, one in which the girls were all keen to participate, although some of the sweets on the Christingles did not survive until the end of the service!

We are sad to say goodbye to Head Chorister Emily Budd, a very competent musician and loyal member of the choir for seven years, who has been an excellent leader and example to the younger girls. We welcomed four new girls during the Autumn term and two more girls join us soon.



Girls, boys and men on Christmas morning

Dates for your diary

Important services

31 Jan	6.30pm	Candlemas Choral Evensong
17 Feb	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday Sung Eucharist
25 Mar	7.30pm	The Annunciation Sung Eucharist
28 Mar	10am	Palm Sunday Sung Eucharist
1 Apr	7.30pm	Maundy Thursday Sung Eucharist
2 Apr	TBC	Liturgy of Good Friday
3 Apr	8pm	Easter Vigil
4 Apr	10am	Easter Sunday Sung Eucharist
	6.30pm	Festal Choral Evensong
2 May	3pm	Practice, tea and Choral Evensong at Sherborne Abbey

Concerts

30 Jan	7.30pm	Boys singing with Winchester City Festival Choir, St Swithun's Performing Arts Centre, Winchester
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Social events

22 Jan	7.30pm	Belgian evening Chips, waffles and the video of last year's tour
24–30 Aug 2010		Choir Holiday to Newcastle, Hexham and Carlisle, in association with George's Trust

And finally...

- ❖ Congratulations to **Meghann and David Hewett** (both former head choristers) on the birth of Joshua Peter on 12 November.
- ❖ Welcome to **Richard Holt** (and his family), who joined us in early November as a tenor on Cantoris. He has previously sung in the choir of St. Bartholemew the Great, London, and the London Philharmonic Choir.
- ❖ We thank **Alastair Nisbet**, who has left the choir after three years of loyal service and wish him well for the future.