

## Steventon Choral Society Concerts in 2009-2010

### Saturday 5th June and Thursday 10th June: A Summer Serenade

Steventon Village Hall

Conductor: Terry Pearce

Pianist: Michael Evans

The concert opened with a selection of songs from the ever popular Lerner and Loewe musical, *My Fair Lady*, and included a small group enjoying *The Ascot Gavotte* (complete with some fabulous hats) and an enthusiastic performance from Helen Pearce (soprano) of *Just You Wait 'Enery Higgins*. The choir then sang an arrangement of *Unchained Melody*, one of the most recorded songs of the 20th century, and made famous by Jimmy Young and then the Righteous Brothers. This was followed by another solo, this time by Diana Bowder (soprano) who sang the old Cornish folk song *Sweet Nightingale* (also known as *Down in Those Valleys Below*).



The ladies of the choir then sang *Where the Gentle Avon Flows* – an arrangement by Ronald Binge of Elizabethan Serenade. *Castle in the Cloud* from *Les Miserables* was the choice of Rebecca Joice (soprano) for her solo, while another song from the shows, *Feed the Birds*, from *Mary Poppins* was sung by Caroline Miller and Mo Hunt (both contraltos). The choir returned to sing *All Through the Night* – the Welsh Air *Ar Hyd Y Nos*. The members of Steventon Church Choir then sang Howard Goodall's arrangement of *The Lord is My Shepherd* made famous as the theme from the popular TV show, *The Vicar of Dibley*. The first half closed with Terry Pearce (bass) and choir singing the *Yeoman of England* from Edward German's *Merrie England*.

The hall resounded to a different type of music for the beginning of the second half with a short comeback visit from three members of Abba! The trio gave a rousing performance of *Dancing Queen* and the led the choir in two other Abba favourites, *Super Trooper* and *Mamma Mia*. After a comic story from John Hunt it was back to more traditional choral singing with a performance by a small group of choir members of the Scottish air, *Loch Lomond*. Comedy was again in the air when Terry Pearce, John Hunt and Gerry Brewer gave us their rendition of the *Gendarmes Duet* by Offenbach – complete with British bobby's helmets!



In complete contrast the choir then sang an arrangement of the old Irish air, *Danny Boy*, to complete our trip round the British Isles. This was followed by an arrangement by William Stickles of *Old Devil Moon* from the 1947 musical *Finian's Rainbow* and a rousing selection of songs from Lionel Bart's ever popular musical *Oliver* (50 years' old this year). The concert ended with audience participation in a London sing-a-long led by various members of the choir and starting with various members of the choir *Doing the Lambeth Walk*!



*London sing-song:*

- Lambeth Walk
- Booms-a-daisy
- May Be It's Because I'm A Londoner
- Any Old Iron
- Let's All Go Down The Strand
- I'm Hen-er-y The Eighth I Am
- Daisy Bell
- I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts
- When Father Painted the Parlour
- My Old Man Said Follow The Van
- Roll Out The Barrel
- I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles
- Show Me The Way To Go Home
- We'll Meet Again
- Down At The Old Bull And Bush

**Sunday 28th March: Spring Concert**

St Michael and All Angels Parish Church, Steventon

Conductor: Terry Pearce

Organist: Michael Evans

Guest soloist: John Buckley (tenor)

The first half of the concert featured Vivaldi's Gloria (RV589 – written between 1713 and 1716) with soloists Helen Pearce (soprano), Diana Bowder (soprano) and Rebecca Joice (alto).

More late baroque music formed the second half of the concert. Handel's four Coronation Anthems were first sung at the coronation of George II on 11 October 1727 and were Handel's first commission at a naturalised British subject.

The King Shall Rejoice  
 My Heart Is Inditing  
 Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened  
 Zadok The Priest

Parts of the first three anthems were sung by various quartets and quintets made up of Helen Pearce (soprano), Diana Bowder (soprano), Rebecca Joice (alto), Abby Evans (alto), John Buckley (tenor) and Terry Pearce (bass).

A total of £211 was donated to the Church Organ Fund.

**Thursday 4th February: Fundraising concert for the Haiti disaster**

Steventon Village Hall

Conductor: Terry Pearce

Pianist: Michael Evans

Special guests: Steventon Church Choir and the Steventon Singers

This 'scratch' concert of light music raised over £1,800 for the [UNICEF](#) Haiti Earthquake Children's Appeal and featured a selection of favourites from the choir's repertoire:

- Come To The Fair
- Linden Lea
- Love Changes Everything (from Aspects of Love)
- Climb Every Mountain (from The Sound of Music)
- Edelweiss (from The Sound of Music)
- The Black Hills of Dakota (from Calamity Jane)
- Oklahoma (from Oklahoma)
- Michael, Row The Boat
- Zadok the Priest (from Handel's Coronation Anthems)
- Gloria (opening chorus from Vivaldi's Gloria)
- The Cachucha (from The Gondoliers)
- You'll Never Walk Alone (from Carousel)

The programme was interspersed with contributions from individual choir members and guests:

- Poem by Mo Hunt
- Songbird (a song originally made famous by Fleetwood Mac) sung by Rebecca Joisce who accompanied herself on her electronic harp
- If Those Lips Could Speak (a hit from 1907) sung by Gerry Brewer
- Love Divine All Loves Excelling sung by Steventon Church Choir
- Poem by Caroline Miller
- The Organ Grinder - John Hunt entertained with his street organ
- Mary Poppins medley sung by the Steventon Singers
- Jokes and a song by Jack Jarvis
- I Could Have Danced All Night (from My Fair Lady) sung by Helen Pearce (soprano)
- Bye-bye Love (The Everly Brothers's debut recording) sung by Tom Hartley and Terry Pearce (accompanied by Terry on the guitar)
- Bless this House (originally made famous by John McCormack) sung by Helen and Terry Pearce

The Reverend Colin Patching spoke at the end of the concert about the plight of the people of Haiti and the problems the country faced.

#### **Thursday 17th December and Saturday 19th December: Christmas Concerts**

Steventon Village Hall

Conductor: Terry Pearce

Pianist: Michael Evans

All profits from the Saturday Concert are being donated to [PACE](#) – a charity inspired by the principles of conductive education that seeks to help children with physical disabilities such as cerebral palsy. The PACE Centre is in Aylesbury but is attended by some children from Oxfordshire including the granddaughter of one of the choral society's supporters from Drayton who, before the concert, spoke movingly about the Centre's work and its need for funds.



The concert began with the choir singing Merry Merry Christmas followed by Ding Dong Merrily on High and Christmas Day – Gustav Holst's choral fantasy on old carols with soloists Helen Pearce (soprano), Rebecca Joice (mezzo-soprano) and Tom Hartley (bass). Another old favourite came next – We Three Kings with 'kings' Jack Jarvis, Gerry Brewer and Tom Hartley. The choir then sang a carol, Stannington, in memory of a former pianist George Dyson before having a short break while Rebecca Joice sang First Mercy by Peter Warlock (Thursday) and Mo Hunt told the story of why there is a fairy on the top of the Christmas tree (Saturday). The choir returned to sing John Rutter's Candlelight Carol and a well-known Christmas song, Winter Wonderland. It was then chance for the audience to join in with Good King Wenceslas and Hark the Herald Angels Sing before the choir sang Three Kings from Persian Lands Afar with soloist Terry Pearce (bass). Next came a new carol, A Christmas Message, with words by local poets Bill and Gill Martin set to music by pianist Michael Evans. This was followed by See Amid the Winter's Snow and two more carols for the audience – In the Bleak Mid-Winter and The Holly and the Ivy. In complete contrast Helen Pearce and Trish Napper performed the Irving Berlin song, We're a Couple of Swells, made famous by Judy Garland and Fred Astaire in the show Easter Parade. Another Irving Berlin number – White Christmas – ended the first half of the concert.

The second half began with John Hunt entertaining the audience with several humorous stories. The choir then sang three quite different pieces – a musical setting of the old rhyme, Christmas Is Coming the Geese are Getting Fat, the Cliff Richard hit, Mistletoe and Wine, and an arrangement of the traditional carol, It Came Upon the Midnight Clear, by Richard Storrs Willis. Helen Pearce (soprano) followed to sing A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square – the well-known song first performed in 1940 – before the audience joined the choir to sing the traditional carols, O Come All Ye Faithful and Once In Royal David's City. The choir sang another John Rutter favourite, Angels Carol, and an arrangement of one of the most popular Christmas songs, Jingle Bells. The 'fun' theme continued with the audience joining in to sing Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer, When Santa Got Stuck Up the Chimney and The Twelve Days of Christmas (the last one with actions by the choir). After a short speech by the chairman, Caroline Miller, the concert ended with an arrangement by Sir Malcolm Sargent of the Negro spiritual, Mary Had A Baby, and the heartfelt song, Let There Be Peace On Earth.

#### **Sunday 20th December: St Michael & All Angels, Steventon**

Members of the choral society joined the church choir for the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

#### **Sunday 17th October: Celebration Service at St Michael & All Angels, Steventon**

Choir members joined the Church choir at a special service to dedicate the new carpeted nave platform designed to allow more varied use of the church. The choir sang three pieces – two anthems by John Rutter (Look at the World and God be in my Head) and the Negro spiritual Michael Row the Boat – as well as leading the congregation in the four hymns and the psalm.

**Saturday 10th October: A sing-in of Handel's Messiah as part of Voices for Hospices 2009**

Parish Church of St Michael & All Angels, Steventon

Musical director: Terry Pearce

Organist: Robert Thomas

Continuo: Valerie Cooper

Trumpet: Mark Prowen

Soprano: Helen Pearce

Mezzo-soprano: Rebecca Joisce

Tenor: John Buckley

Bass: Leslie Macleod-Miller

A total of £675.50 was raised for [Sir Michael Sobell House](#), Oxford, including £190 via [Just Giving](#).

A choir of some 50 singers made up of members of Steventon Choral Society and friends enjoyed a rousing and uplifting performance of Handel's Messiah. The concert was one of many events taking place around the world on the same day to raise money for hospices and palliative care units as part of [Voices for Hospices 2009](#). A new venture this year was a page of the [Just Giving](#) website so that supporters could make a donation or sponsor a singer online direct to Sobell House.



*The singers, musical director and musicians after the concert*



*Back row: John Buckley, Leslie Macleod-Miller, Robert Thomas, Terry Pearce  
Front row: Rebecca Joisce, Helen Pearce*