



# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2008

## LETTER FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

My Dear Friends

At the time of writing we have just finished our Showcase 2008 at the Wyvern Theatre. What a Showcase it was! I was thrilled with every single moment of the afternoon and evening performances! My only small disappointment was that a few microphones failed to come on at the appointed time! Nothing too serious. I couldn't single out any one particular song or soloist - all were fabulous! It was wonderful to have Hadrian singing with us again, oh and what a band ably led by dear Paul Maguire.

I have just completed the Junior Show "Oliver and More". It looks to be a great little show and features some of our Kentwood Men and Rachel Sparrow from the Show Choir, and of course all the Junior Choir on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November. Tickets are now on sale at the Arts Centre.

Tickets are also on sale for our Christmas Cracker at the Wyvern Theatre on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Summer months are holiday months so if you are going away do have a good rest and a great time. The world we are living in is ever hectic!

As I said in the Wyvern Showcase - thank God for music! Music is something we can all share and enjoy even if we are not performers. Have a great summer!

Love

*Sheila*

The Rotary Club of Swindon are delighted to have a strong link with the Kentwood Show Choir who each year pass on to us the profits from their "Christmas Cracker" concert, so for the year 2007, £2,500 went to various local charities.

**If you wish to know more about the choir why don't you visit our website at  
[www.kentwoodshowchoir.org](http://www.kentwoodshowchoir.org)**



## **RETURN OF AN 'OLD' GIRL**

I'm not sure if coming back to Kentwood was ever in the grand scheme of things, but I'm definitely glad I'm back. I finished University last year in September, and was very glad to come home and move in with my fiancé Matt. Unfortunately the job situation wasn't as good as I'd hoped and 8 months after finishing, following a stint of childminding and being an office girl I'm finally facing the most petrifying prospect of starting my working life as a midwife. At this moment in time (5 days away from starting) I'm actually on the brink of a nervous breakdown, wondering what the hell I'm playing at! But there we are, can't go back now, have a student loan to pay off!!

So back to life in Kentwood, I was actually surprised at how little things seemed to have changed, which is great. I know the repertoire certainly has, and am facing the daunting prospect of learning lots of new songs, you lot packed a lot a learning into three years! The songs that I had learnt seemed to come back to me in stages, so I either remembered the lyrics, melody or actions, so I looked and sounded a bit of a donut for a while, but now I think I've cracked it, and can manage all three together!

The first concert I did was in Bradford upon Avon, and I felt very nervous. I didn't recognise introductions to songs, so wasn't sure if I knew the song or not; I did a bit of bobbing up and down in that concert. During the concert the realisation of coming back into Kentwood hit home. I've been singing with Sheila since I was two and a bit, but it's scary how much you forget when you don't do something on a regular basis. I had also forgotten the great sense of team work, and achievement you get when you sing with Kentwood, the sense of pride when someone sings a brilliant solo or you stand up to sing a song for the first time having spent ages learning it.

It's definitely better to be in a concert performing than sitting in the audience at the Wyvern and singing along, getting funny looks! I can't believe now it's nearly the June show, and now I feel like I've never been away. Thank you for having me back Sheila.

*Susannah Arnold*

## **AND HELLO TO A NEW MAN!**

After Sheila called us a 'middle-aged' choir, I thought I would try and redress the balance for the ladies in Kentwood. I am the newest male recruit and as I am retired, the girls can draw some comfort from the fact that I raised the average age when I joined. So it might be more to do with my age than theirs!

It is a year since I first turned up, and that time has flown by. I know Sheila will not mind me saying, but it is a tough school and the standards set are very high. But that is how it should be and I appreciate and accept her reasons for that. It is also tremendous fun and the rest of the choir have been extremely friendly and welcoming.

Although my singing 'career' has taken me from Parish Church choirs to American Military Chorale and Light Operatic Societies, interspersed with some small stage productions, my formal music studying has been pretty limited since Grade 5 Theory and Grade 4 Practical Piano more years ago than I care to remember. But, as they say, you're never too old to learn, and I can certainly say I am learning a lot.

I was pleased to play at least a part in the Cracker last year and I am definitely looking forward to the Showcase in the summer. Just hope I can remember where I put that wig and those tights. Now back to learning the 'file' – 4 down, only 71 more songs to go.

*John Wilson*



## THE LETTERS PAGE

Dear Kentwood Choir

Thank you once again for a very informative newsletter which I thoroughly enjoy, even though I can't attend your wonderful shows these days. Still, I have marvellous memories. If you ever record the hymn 'Living Lord' I would love to have it (one of my favourites). The 'No Nursing Home For Me' article really made me smile, what a wonderful life to lead. May you prosper in the year ahead. Much love,

*Daphne Carrington-Ough*

To Sheila & Chris Harrod and the Kentwood Show Choir

Just a short note to thank both of you and the Choir for the wonderful St George's Day concert in the Council Chamber on Wednesday. Everyone who attended greatly enjoyed the evening, not least the Lord Lieutenant and the new High Sheriff. Sue and I very much appreciate your support for the Mayor's charities over the past year as well as the tremendous entertainment that the Choir continues to provide for Swindon residents. Regards,

*Councillor Michael Barnes, Mayor of Swindon*

Dear Sheila

Thank you so much for a terrific evening of music tonight. Truly great and my friends loved the one written by Joy Webb. I don't think I have heard that before - lovely. As you know I am having my stent fitted tomorrow, what a wonderful send off and will go to 'sleep' with Rule Britannia ringing in my ears. Thank you once again to you and your lovely choir for all the lovely music. Love from,

*Betty (The Young One)*

Dear Sheila

I would just like to say how much we enjoyed the talk that Yvonne Walker gave to the Women's Fellowship, she was an excellent speaker and her talk was very interesting. Our members were down a little owing to holidays this week. The Choir is doing a wonderful job under your leadership, giving so much pleasure to people. Yours sincerely,

*Muriel Baker*



## **THE KENTWOOD SHOW CHOIR PERFORMED IN PINNER TO RAPTUROUS APPLAUSE ON SUNDAY 27 APRIL 2008**

What a wonderful experience having the Kentwood Show Choir perform for us in St Luke's Church last Sunday afternoon. That day, England was generally covered by dark clouds overhead with persistent heavy rain. Nevertheless, the Kentwood Show Choir brought the sunshine to central Pinner, creating a warm exciting atmosphere for all those gathered.

The high ceiling of St Luke's Church added to the resounding quality of the powerful harmonies produced by the Choir. Canon Robert Ploudre introduced the event and with the brilliant leadership and clear direction from Sheila Harrod, the Choir opened the concert with "Let the Earth Resound with Music". The audience was visibly shocked by the brilliance and power of the singing. By the time the Choir moved onto "Can You Feel The Love Tonight" by Elton John (in recognition of him being a local Pinner lad), the audience were bursting with applause in expectation of what was to come. At every stage Sheila kept us informed and entertained, exemplifying that music is such a joy to share with everyone, from every culture worldwide.

When the Choir gave their special rendition of the "Hallelujah Chorus" it felt as if we were being lifted up en masse - later, during his closing comments Canon Robert Ploudre gleefully remarked that if one could pick the ideal circumstances to die and ascent to heaven it would surely be at that precise moment when the Choir sang that anthem. Sheila connected well with the audience and showed her command by involving the younger members of the audience, who she brought to centre stage for an impromptu performance of "Do-Ra-Me". This was much appreciated by the parents and congregation alike.

Just as we thought things could not possibly get any better, some members of the Choir stepped up to the microphone and gave stunning performances. A quiet, shy and retiring member awkwardly got to his feet and slowly shuffled to the central position. The audience wondered what he was up to and their expression turned to amazement as he began to sing "Mr Cellophane" (from "Chicago"). The soloist was our very own Robert Harman (yes, he was adopted instantly by us all). His performance was on a high with the very best performances one can expect from the top West End or Broadway theatres. By the time he finished the audience rose up showering him with applause and many waited eagerly to meet him afterwards to express their appreciation. Following soloist performed to equally high standards such as "Stars" from Les Miserables sung by Graham Davison-Smith and the duet "Nella Fantasia" performed by Gill May and Kathy Hobson. The Choir completed the show with their very own rendition of the "Irish Blessing".

Interestingly, the following message was published in the St Luke's Pinner weekly newsletter: "The Kentwood Show Choir - very many thanks to all who organised our very successful concert last Sunday, which was part of our Golden Jubilee fund raising. We look forward to future events with great anticipation. £456 was raised for the Jubilee Fund. Those who attended the concert were so pleased that they would like the opportunity to see the choir again - a date then for your diary 30<sup>th</sup> November. - Christmas Cracker - we hope to organise a trip to Swindon.

*John Norris*



## **ANOTHER STUNNING SHOW FROM KENTWOOD**

(Review taken from the Swindon Advertiser 24 June 2008)

### **KENTWOOD SHOWCASE 2008 AT THE WYVERN THEATRE ON 22 JUNE 2008**

How can I begin? Wow!! Sheila Harrod and her Kentwood Show Choir are beyond doubt one of the best show choirs in this country. I know that's just my opinion, but anyone who was lucky enough to be in the audience during this second packed house will surely agree with me.

The showcase of talent seemed to me to build to a finale the like of which I haven't seen for a while. Maybe because of the stunning arrangement of the music of Les Miserables, by West End musical director Paul Maguire, who is also the band director of Kentwood or maybe because of the guest, ex-Kentwood pupil, Hadian Delacy, who just happened to have played the roles in the West End production or, maybe just because of all of the sheer talent that graced the stage, from the youngest to the oldest. Put it all together and that's what makes the whole thing so spectacularly stunning.

I just wish I could mention everyone by name. However, the beautiful voice of little Daniel Woodward simply shone out, as did Rachel Sparrows' rendition of As Long As He Needs Me, from Oliver. These are stars of the future.

Wonderful solos, duets, groups and full choir numbers, as always, nearly brought the house down.

There isn't much more to say really, except that Sheila Harrod and her Kentwood Choir never fail to produce a fabulous show. With the help of some very special people, such as lighting, staging, costumes and the band, the icing is well and truly put on what is already a faultless cake.

*Ros Hollands*

### **AND HERE ARE SOME COMMENTS RECEIVED**

"I have decided I must write and thank you and the girls (and boys) for another excellent show. This I think was your best, not too much moving around and lots of what we want to hear, the voices. Many around me were in tears!

We are truly spoiled having you as our own local choir".

"Thank you for another superb evening of wonderful music and entertainment at the June Show. Superb, amazing, wonderful and so many other words I heard on the way out. You go from strength to strength and long may it continue.

Thank you once again, look forward to the Hilton Extravaganza now".



## FUTURE CONCERTS

### 2008

5 July	Corn Exchange, Hungerford. R Kellow (01488 682745)
12 July	All Saint Church, Evesham. C Vizor (01386 641397)
3 August	Macmillan, Hilton Hotel, Swindon. G Thornton (01367 252535)
29 August	Warnford School, Highworth. S Holt (01793 762421)
6 September	Chilbolton, Northwood House. D Wild (01264 860358)
4 October	Assembly Hall, Melksham. S White (01225 704428)
31 October	Memorial Hall, Shrivenham. E Ware (01793 783026)
1&2 November	Junior Show, Arts Centre, Swindon. (01793 614837)
30 November	Christmas Cracker, Wyvern Theatre. (01793 524481)
17 December	Roves Farm. R Burr (01793 763939)

### 2009

7 March	Kentwood Kompany, Arts Centre, Swindon (01793 614837)
3 April	St Mark's Church, Swindon. C Green (01793 721897)
24 April	Bromham Social Centre. M Lloyd-Evans (01380 850366)
8 May	St Mary's Church, Fairford. J Williams (01285 712127)
12 & 13 June	Kentwood Showcase 2009, Wyvern Theatre (01793 524481)
12 December	Evesham Methodist Church. B Powney (01386 760323)

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