



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2009

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL

LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

My Dear Friends,

May I be one of the first to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

I really do not know where this year has gone, do you? I think because we lead such busy lives it makes time go by so quickly. Can you believe that it will soon be 2010?

I personally thought that this year's Christmas Cracker was magical. I loved every moment of it as I hope you all did. So many people tell me that the Cracker is their start of Christmas!

Can I leave you with a quote from one of our songs:

"We all know that there should be love and friendship all around. We all hope that we will see a day they can be found. That love we all can share and if we really care, perhaps the only thing we really need is time.

We live on borrowed time, yesterday is past, tomorrow seems a million miles away. But together we can find we can make love last. But living every moment, every hour, every day".

Have a wonderful Christmas season and thank you all for your hard work, love and support.

Much love,

Sheila



There have been a number of concerts of note since our last newsletter and here are the reports of some of them.

**THOSE KENTWOOD KIDS: CATS AND OTHER TALES
ARTS CENTRE 31ST OCTOBER and 1ST NOVEMBER**

From the minute Sheila Harrod played the first note on the piano I was hooked. There aren't many musicians in Swindon who could have played with such feeling and technical correctness. I knew that once again I could just sit back to watch and listen as the music flowed in this excellent production.

Diminutive Mollie Hayward started the whole thing off with a tremendous poem from the musical Cats said over the music called The Naming Of Cats. I couldn't have remembered three lines of this marathon piece: Mollie was word perfect.

There was so much to enjoy from the youngest to the eldest, including the guests from the Kentwood Show Choir, I couldn't fault anyone - word perfect and not a bum note to be heard. Could I single anyone out? With great difficulty - all were so well rehearsed. Sometimes someone will take my eye as a potential star of the future. That person in this case was 15 year old Dominic Baker with his rendition of Pilate's Dream. I've been proved right in the past, so watch this space.

Everyone involved in this production is to be congratulated once again on a job well done. You cannot produce a production like this without discipline, knowhow and excellent teaching in all quarters on and off the stage to bring it to fruition. Sheila's motto is "Music is a fair and glorious gift from God". Watching her conduct the band, play piano and conduct the kids on stage I'd say He gave it to her in abundance. I think the rest of the audience might just agree with me. Well done kids too - All of you.

Ros Hollands, Swindon Advertiser

And comments from you the audience

"John and I have been to many, many concerts by both the Senior and Junior Choirs and have always come away feeling uplifted by the sheer quality of the performances. However, we must say that the concert last evening by the Juniors will take some living up to in the future....."

"I thought the show was absolutely fantastic and please pass on my congratulations to Sheila"

"May I take this opportunity to congratulate Sheila and her team on those Kentwood Kids (Cats and other Tales) on Saturday at the Arts Centre, from start to finish it was brilliant. You didn't want it to end"



Not all news is good and sadly one of our past 'old' girls, Kay Eggleton, passed away in September. All those who were able to make it sang at her funeral at Wroughton Church. Her daughter, Louise, wrote:

"What can I say! Thank you so much for all of your help and support you gave in order to give my mum the perfect service. All friends and family thought it was beautiful and I am very grateful. Thank you all again, love and best wishes".

SWINDON 2009 – THE YEAR OF THE HEART CAMPAIGN CHARITY DINNER – 6TH OCTOBER

This event was held at Fabios Restaurant in Old Town and a group of the Choir provided the entertainment for the evening. Rod Marshall from the British Heart Foundation wrote thanking the Choir for a really fantastic evening. There was absolutely no doubt that the Kentwood Show Choir made the evening and everyone present was in awe of the performances given. It was appreciated that the venue was not ideal (with waiters moving in and out) but, being the professionals that you all were, it did not appear to worry anyone. Over £1700 was raised which was very worth while.

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSOCIATION

The Choir donated £1000 from the June Showcase to support the work of the Motor Neurone Disease Association financially but also to promote the Association itself and its work both locally and nationally. They have seen a significant growth in both the local awareness of the work of the Association and the North Wiltshire Group and events such as this have undoubtedly been an important factor in this, as well as enabling them to provide more support locally and to make considerable further contributions to the national research into the cause of MND and possible treatments.

CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY THE ROTARY

Each year the Choir donates a fair portion of its Christmas Cracker proceeds to the Swindon Rotary Club who in turn donates to deserving causes. Last year our donation of £3600 was distributed to the following:

Stoneham Housing	£300
Aidis Trust	£100
Riding for Disabled Cerney Wick	£100
Swindon Down's Syndrome Group	£100
Naomi House	£300
Green Hut	£900
Shelter Box Trust	£900
Earmarked for RYLA	£900



KENTWOOD CHRISTMAS CRACKER, WYVERN THEATRE 29TH NOVEMBER 2009

A CRACKER OF A NIGHT

Someone told me that the festive season didn't start until the Kentwood Christmas Cracker. If that's the case then Swindon is now in full mode after pitch-perfect performances from the group's senior, junior, youth and show choirs.

The show opened with the choir, all dressed in red complete with white furry shawls and muffs, singing their hearts out before two members stepped forward dressed as Mary and Joseph. The action then jumped to the big screen as a video (filmed by choir member John Marshall) of the pair making their way to Bethlehem (or Roves Farm in their case) played out. It was a move that immediately drew mutterings of appreciation for the audience.

If you're not one for audience participation then this wasn't the show for you as within minutes Sheila Harrod had the packed auditorium singing carols in harmony. From carols to ballads, serious numbers to light-hearted fun there was something to appeal to everyone. The men in the choir dressed in panto garb got into the spirit with a song about who they'd really like to be - Mick Jagger or Michael Flatley! - while the youngsters had the crowd laughing along with their rendition of Jingle Bells with alternative lyrics. There was even a pantomime cow.

The choir were joined on stage by the Aldbourne Band who belted out their numbers with gusto. A thoroughly enjoyable night for all.

Stephanie Tye, Swindon Advertiser

During December members of the choir performed at four completely different venues. First of all four of us sang to 90 year old Frank Hawkins in his home. Frank has been very poorly of late and we hope that in our small way we brought some joy to him for Christmas.

On Friday 4th December four more members went to Ampney St Mary Church to take part in their Advent service. This very small church was situated in the middle of a field, held only 30 people and only had enough electricity supply for our piano. The church was lit by candle light which made the whole thing magical.

Sunday 6th December saw the whole choir perform carols alongside animals at Roves Farm. The choir were joined by a cow, llama, horses, donkeys and sheep and the children dressed up in costume and re-enacted the Christmas story with Rupert Burr's narration as through the eyes of the donkey in the stable. This was a wonderful and realistic venue for a carol service which the choir members love to sing at. All proceeds were donated to the Prospect Hospice.

Yvonne Walker

And finally, a concert at Evesham

Evesham Methodist Church was delighted to welcome back for the fourth time the Kentwood Show Choir who gave a concert on Saturday 12th December. On previous occasions the Evesham Arts Centre was the venue because at those times we were raising money to re-develop the church and then to re-furbish after flood damage, so this time it was wonderful to hold the concert in our church. Although December is a busy month with many other activities, shows and concerts etc. we were pleased to have a full church with a most appreciative audience.

The Choir, of course, gave a superb concert and for many people it set the tone for Christmas - relaxed, happy and full of positive hope. At times the atmosphere was electric and everyone went

home with a warm glowing feeling so THANK YOU Sheila, musicians and the Choir for all your hard work and the time you give so freely.

In 2007 we were devastated when our lovely church was flooded for the second time but were overwhelmed by the generosity of people from all over the country, so we decided to pass on this generosity to people suffering similar circumstances because it really does help to know people are thinking of you. We are therefore absolutely thrilled that together with a few donations we raised £840 which has now been sent to the Cumbrian Flood Appeal.

Thank you, thank you Kentwood. You are special people who use your talents to make others feel good.

Brenda Powney

FUTURE PUBLIC CONCERTS

2010

January

Sun 24th Evening Cabaret at Blunsdon House. John Holmes (01793 522352)

April

Fri 23rd Mayor of Swindon Charity Concert, Wyvern Theatre with the Aldbourne Band

May

Fri 7th May Sundial Theatre, Cirencester

Sat 15th May Haydon Centre, Swindon

June

Fri 11th and Sat 12th June Show, Wyvern Theatre

August

Sun 1st Hilton Hotel (for Macmillan)

November

Sun 7th Festival of Remembrance, Wyvern Theatre

Sun 28th Christmas Cracker at 5pm and 8pm, Wyvern Theatre

You may be interested to know that we do a lot of private concerts throughout the year and during 2010 we will be entertaining a number of senior citizens clubs, special birthday and wedding celebrations, the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association at the Hilton Hotel, Swindon and the Grenadier Guards Association at Littlecote House.

SWINDON MUSIC FESTIVAL 2010

A quick reminder that the closing date for entries for next year's Festival is Friday 15 January 2010. Syllabus and entry forms are available from the website at www.swindonmusicfestival.co.uk

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