

Press Review - Surrey Advertiser

Celebrating 21 years of the twinning of Guildford and Freiburg, the Guildford Philharmonic Choir was joined by its German counterparts, the Freiburger Bachchor and that splendid orchestral ensemble, the Brandenburg Sinfonia, for a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, in the cathedral on Saturday.

St Matthew is the more reflective of Bach's two great settings of the Passion narrative. However, drama is far from absent, and in the interjections of the often angry crowd, the combined choirs cut through the acoustic.

If in the first chorus some voices stood out overmuch, the texture soon settled down to a pleasing homogeneity, and the singing exuded confidence.

The Surrey County Youth Choir's small, but important contribution, the *ripieno* chorale in the opening chorus, came through clearly.

The conductor Jeremy Backhouse worked extremely hard to keep his forces together. The result was a very creditable performance in imposing, if acoustically, less than ideal surroundings. Above all the spiritual message of Bach's great work rang true.

Shelagh Godwin

Behind the scenes - Putting up the tiered staging

Every time we perform a concert in the cathedral, a band of volunteers gathers at 9.00 am to assemble the staging.

It is an exacting task, but the gang work well together and it is satisfying to see it set up and ready for the evening. Then, immediately after the performance, it is all taken down and put away by a team now augmented by more eager choir members; still elegantly dressed in their concert finery.

It comes down much quicker than it goes up!!!

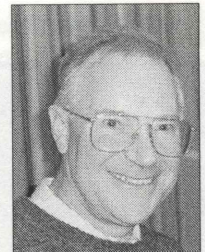
The GPC has become so skilled in quick and accurate rigging (and de-rigging) that we are much in demand by other choirs participating in the scheme. The Tiered Staging is the brain-child of our Secretary and Concert Manager, Stephen Jepson. Back in 1995 Stephen had become very frustrated with the effect that the Cathedral's acoustic had on choral performances. The Association of Surrey Choirs (GPC, GCS, Epworth and Surrey Festival) was

formed to purchase and administer the staging for use by the participating choirs in the Cathedral.

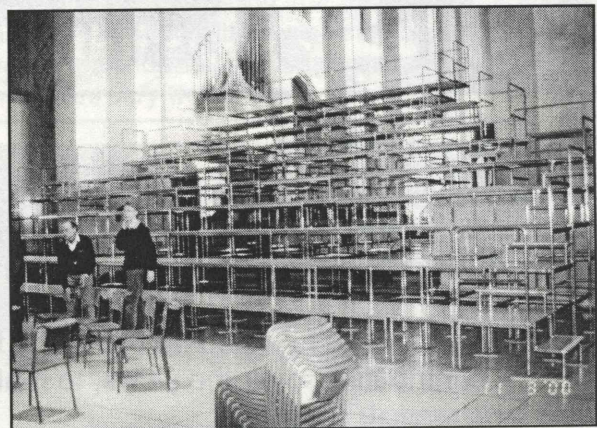
The necessary funds were raised and the Cathedral agreed to provide storage for the material. Stephen strove to find a design that would suit all the participating choirs and to obtain the best deal with the available funds. Eventually a final specification was agreed and the order was placed with Stage Systems of Loughborough.

Since the staging is built using mainly standard components, it can be used in a large variety of ways, and can indeed be used at other venues (as either a flat or a stepped stage for orchestras, ensembles and drama groups).

The member choirs of the ASC are delighted with their investment. The effect of the "wall of sound" concept has been universally acclaimed by audiences as an immense improvement on the old arrangement.



Getting the lower levels in place



Nearly ready for the concert

The staging is available for hire for suitable purposes within the Cathedral or, exceptionally, in other suitable venues, at the sole discretion of the ASC. Please contact Stephen Jepson on 01306 730383 (phone or fax) or by e-mail at jepson@feldaysys.freemove.co.uk

Pictorial mementos of the Freiburg Visit



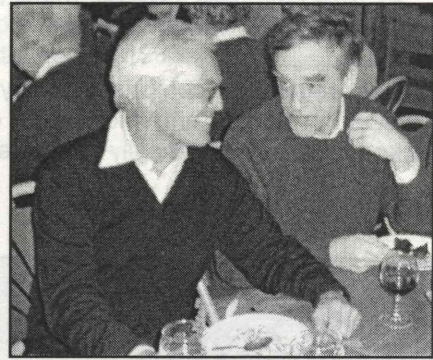
Hans-Michael Beuerle and Jeremy shake hands after the meal



Cornelia takes a bow



Norman and Bob tried to keep order on their table



Christopher and Peter seem to be having an interesting chat



Some people had to queue !



Jackie and Chris kept Christophe amused

The Surrey County Youth Choir (SCYC)

When we sang the St Matthew Passion in the cathedral in March we were accompanied by young ladies from the SCYC, who sang the *ripieno* parts, but many of us knew little about the SCYC, so here is a little inside information:

- The SCYC has been around for over 12 years.
- It is a full SATB choir.
- It recruits through schools and by word of mouth.
- They perform two concerts a school term, on average.
- They practice one evening a week in Woking.
- They are always on the lookout for new members (particularly young men and altos, at present)
- New members have a formal audition after a few weeks.

The choir's repertoire comprises many standard works written for adolescent voices, plus contemporary works which they specifically commission.

Last term they held a concert in St James's Church, Piccadilly, where they performed the Faure Requiem, with some Vivaldi, Lassus and Palestrina. They were accompanied on the organ by our very own Jeremy Filsell, who described the choir and the overall concert as 'most impressive'.

In May SCYC heard that they had succeeded in reaching the National finals of the Festival of Music for Youth. This will involve a day at London's South Bank on 4th July. 20 choirs have been selected in national competitions to participate and the SCYC is thrilled to have been chosen. If they do well in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, they could well be invited to sing in the Schools' Prom Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall in November.

SCYC really enjoyed singing with the GPC and hope that they will be invited to take part in other concerts. Most of their youngsters continue singing after leaving the Youth Choir for university. Many of them will return later and be looking for a choir to sing with - hopefully some will think of joining the GPC.

Sue O'Connell (SCYC Administrator)



The SCYC pictured at Howell's School in Denbigh last October when they were on a residential course

Future Concerts

Belshazzar's Feast, by Sir William Walton will be performed at the Civic Hall on 10th June, 2000.

Sir William Walton (1902-1983)

William Walton was born in Oldham, Lancashire, to a musical family.



He was a chorister at Christ Church Cathedral at Oxford, and later studied at the university. He left Oxford without a degree, and from 1920 lived with the Sitwell family in London.

The three Sitwell siblings, all budding poets, introduced him to many major musical and literary figures of the time, including Delius, Diaghilev, and T.S. Eliot.

His first notable composition was the suite, *Facade* (1923), composed to accompany recitations of poems by Edith Sitwell and used in 1931 as the score for the highly successful ballet *Facade*.

Further compositions such as *Portsmouth Point* (1925) and his *Viola Concerto* (1929) resulted in national and inter-national popularity.

The blockbuster, *Belshazzar's Feast* was written in 1931.

His work sounds spontaneous, but he could be notoriously slow at composing: he was held up for eight months wondering which note to set to the word 'gold' in *Belshazzar*. Later Walton wrote music for a number of films, as well as operas, symphonies, and marches for the coronations of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II.



Sir William was knighted in 1951. His last years were spent on Ischia near Naples, a favourite haunt of fellow Lancastrian, Gracie Fields. He remained a active composer until his death there in 1983.

Cartoon by John Minnion

And then

Looking Forward to our Autumn Concert

On **28th October**, we will be singing in the Cathedral again :

Haydn : *Insanae et vanae curae*
Mozart : *Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K550*
Mozart : *Mass in C Minor*

(That'll keep us busy for a while !!!)

Fund-raising - co-ordinated by Jackie Alderton

Car -boot Sale, Saturday 29th April, 2000

At the end of a week in which it seemed to rain non-stop, this Saturday (6-15 am) dawned clear and bright: just the day for a Car-Boot Sale !! Slyfield Market was the venue.

The old hands arrive as early as 5-00am to get their best pitch. As late-comers, at 7-10am, we had to make do with what seemed to be a very quiet backwater near the café (handy for tea and coffee), the cattle pens (good for hanging out the clothes attractively) and the toilets (for obvious reasons). We nearly didn't set up our stall there, but were glad that we did, because we had an almost non-stop stream of customers.

We always display the GPC banner and tell customers they are contributing to choir funds.

(P.S. My garage was so full we were afraid of disturbing our resident robin, but it is still there, despite our comings and goings, guarding its nest and four eggs.)

We would like express our thanks to those of you who donated so many items for us to sell on behalf of the choir. (Please keep them coming in).

We raised about **£250** for the choir.



Jackie



The 100 Club is open to all past and present members of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir. Numbers are renewed annually for £12 payable on the 1st April, and profits go to choir funds.

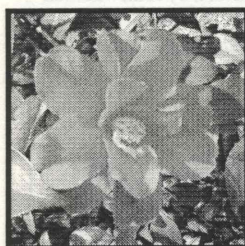
New share-holders are welcome, as we'd like to sell all the 100 numbers for the whole season. A draw is made at the first rehearsal of each month. Draws in June and December of each year are special. Please talk to me at rehearsal, or phone 01932 221918 if you're interested.

Results

The winner of the £100 December prize was Maggie Koetsfeld.

Month	£20	£15	£10
JANUARY	54 M. Dentskevich	60 Colin Jameson	78 Susan Hinton
FEBRUARY	36 Roger Barratt	92 Noreen Ayton	68 Kathleen Aldridge
MARCH	54 M. Dentskevich	88 Jane Kenney	29 Max New
APRIL	33 Geoff Forster	87 Joy Hunter	44 Peter Herbert
MAY	13 Iris Ball	44 Peter Herbert	77 Chris Wilks

Future Fund-raising Events to look out for:



GPC Grand Summer Plant Sale

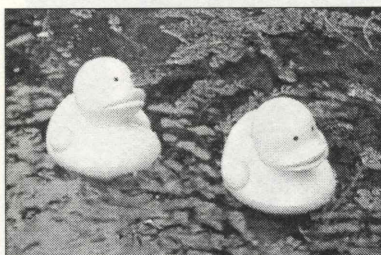
to be held on 5th June during the rehearsal, in aid of Choir funds.

Lots of lovely plants to buy !

And don't forget to bring those extra plants for Hilary to sell !



Coming soon



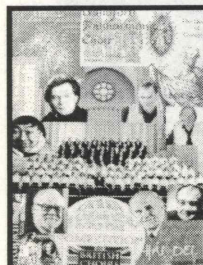
The Great Duck Race

The Event of the year !

To be held at Merrist Wood on 3rd July.

Some Lucky Duckies must win - they might be yours !

Listen for further information at Monday rehearsals.



Choir Notelets are available every week at rehearsals, now at a new low price of **4 cards for £1**

Laurie has a supply ready for sale during rehearsals.

Our own specially designed cards are very useful for writing short notes, birthday greetings, thank-you letters etc.



Members and personalities



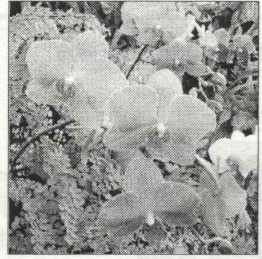
The arrival of Backhouse Junior

Members of the choir were a little apprehensive on the 11th March, the day of the Gala Concert, because they knew that the birth of Jeremy's baby was imminent.

How would we manage if Jeremy was urgently called away?

However, all was well for us and little George Backhouse made his appearance later in the week.

We were all delighted to hear the good news the following Monday. Now we would like to send our congratulations and best wishes to Jeremy and Sally on the birth of their lovely new son.



Baby - report from Jeremy

George William was born on Thursday, 16th March at 11.23 am at Lewisham Hospital with a fine pair of lungs!

Because he was just over 3 weeks early he weighed in at only 5lb 3oz, but robust and fighting fit! He has since started to feed really well and has gained a lot of weight.



Sally and Jeremy with 2 day-old George

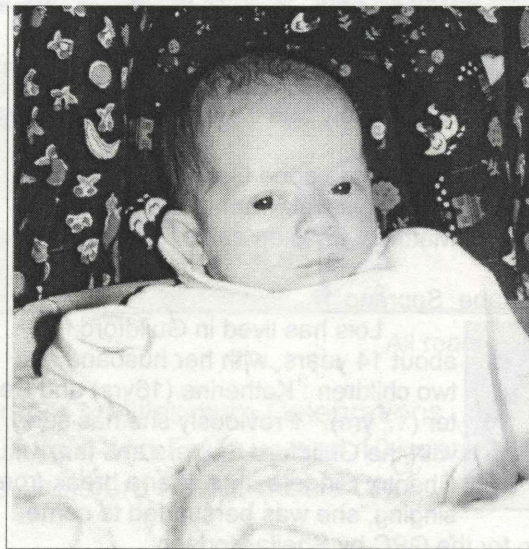
George at 6 weeks:

Likes:

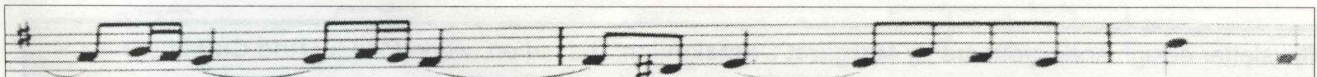
Feeding, being cooed over, weeing over Daddy, being sick over Mummy, his Tiger baby-grow, the music of Mahler, Neighbours, and snooker.

Dislikes:

Having his nappy changed, bath-time, mid-wives brandishing sharp pointy things that get stuck in the foot, builders, Alan Titchmarsh, Manchester United and the music of John Rutter, .



George at 6 weeks



Welcome to New and Returning Members

New Members

Carole Elliott Alto 1



Carole found out about the GPC by 'surfing the web' and found our web-site 'irresistible'. Before 1994 Carole lived in Scotland, where she did a lot of singing in Edinburgh. She has sung in student and cathedral choirs, and in a jazz ensemble in Guildford. She says that her favourite music has to be: Bach, The Beatles and Oscar Peterson.

Formerly Carole was an Office Manager for a firm of 'American loan sharks' in London, but now married, she has a full-time job looking after a tractor-mad toddler, Lewis. She finds the GPC fun, warm and friendly.

Anne Gorath Alto 2



Anne comes from a village in Germany, about 1½ hours drive SE from Frankfurt. She arrived here in September 1999 to work as a volunteer with the YMCA in Guildford, while doing a 'gap' year, and will return home in August. In Germany Anne sang with a local choir. She likes almost all kinds of music - from foreign folk to 'modern'. Anne enjoys going to the theatre and acting in plays. She was recommended to join the GPC by Gillian Rix and Richard Austin, and now enjoys being with us, as she says the atmosphere is very friendly and it's easy to get to know people.

Anne commented on the good German pronunciation in the GPC !! - this was when we were practising for the St Matthew Passion earlier in the year.

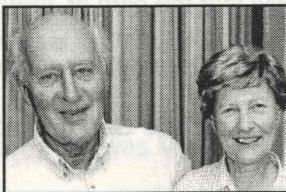
Lois McCabe Soprano 1



Lois has lived in Guildford for about 14 years, with her husband and two children : Katherine (16yrs) and Peter (17 yrs). Previously she has sung with the Guildford Singers and the Chantry Singers, but after a break from singing, she was persuaded to come

along to try the GPC by Sheila Hodson. Lois likes aerobics, fitness and reading. She has catholic taste in music, but particularly likes folk music, jazz, and singing in the church choir. She thinks the GPC is very friendly and well organised.

Valerie and Alec Leggatt Alto 1 and Bass1

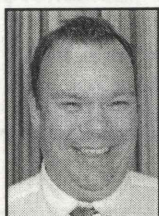


Valerie joined the GPC about a year ago, when she felt like a change of choir. She enjoyed it so much that she insisted that Alec join too.

Previously they have sung together with the London Orpheus, Haslemere Choir and the Waverley Singers. Now retired, they live in the Farnham area and have three grown-up children and four grandchildren. Alec likes skiing and sailing. Valerie enjoys the Arts and gardening.

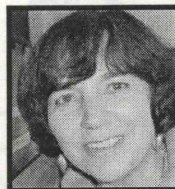
Valerie really enjoys very modern music (e.g. Birtwhistle) and is interested in the way that music is developing now. She would like us to perform more modern music. Alec prefers relatively recent music and Baroque. They both think that the GPC is a very enjoyable choir to be in. They find the musical direction and organisation terrific, and the atmosphere friendly and relaxed.

Johny Larssen Tenor 2



Johny came to Guildford from Stockholm last December with his job as a Business Analyst in the Computer Industry. In Sweden, he started singing as a child. He has sung in a local church choir, the Royal Philharmonic Choir, Stockholm, and a small chamber

choir. Johny enjoys listening to Renaissance music (Palestrina), but he also likes jazz and light music. His hobbies include skiing and travel. The GPC web-site was the reason that Johny joined the GPC and he has been with us since the beginning of the year. He finds the rehearsals well disciplined and members very welcoming.



I hope you have enjoyed reading this fourth edition of the GPC Newsletter. If you would like to make a comment or suggestion for an item to be included in a future edition, please don't hesitate to contact me, either during rehearsal, or on 01483 768789

Margaret Dentskevich, Editor

Newsletter design and layout are by **Margaret Dentskevich**, (based on work done by **Rod Cuff** in previous issues).

Printing is by courtesy of **Alison Rawlinson's** company **ARCS**.