

**November 2015**

Welcome to our November newsletter! We hope you like the new format and the new features. However, this is **your** newsletter, so do let me know what you think, how it might be improved and of any potential items for inclusion! It is our intention to do two letters a year, one in September and one in February, following the Annual General Meeting.

As always 2015 has been a busy year with memorable concerts, including our performances of Faure's Requiem and Poulenc's Gloria in April. We were sorry to lose Robin Hunter after five years in the tenors, Dorothy Walker after seven years in the altos, Sue Dymond after ten years in the sopranos, and Miranda Nicholls after two years also in the sopranos.



It was especially sad to say goodbye to **Hilary Ward**, as Jill MacLeod writes: 'We were very

sorry to lose one of our longstanding members in July. Hilary has moved away to be nearer her family. She had been a member of The Laurence Singers for **thirty-seven** years, joining in 1978, and made a huge contribution to the choir. As well as her numerous solos, those of you who have been groupies for a long time will remember the beautiful duets that she and Maurice used to sing and our Christmas concerts will not be the same without her wonderful readings and poems. We also owe Mike her husband a debt of gratitude for all his stewarding at concerts. They will both be greatly missed'

However, recently we have been pleased to welcome Debs Grace, Karen Langfield, Ann Howard, and Susan Wilson in the sopranos, Denise Rowbotham in the altos, Bob Docherty in the baritones, and Andrew Backhouse in the tenors. Long may they stay and enjoy the music that is unique to our choir!

The summer of 2015 will be remembered for two very special events. First our accompanist **Lauren Hibberd** was married on **18th July** in All Saints Church in Berrington, Shropshire, with a reception in a marquee in the garden of Lauren's parents' house. Lauren says 'We had a wonderful day with all of our close friends and family. We were so lucky with the weather and enjoyed the beautiful Shropshire countryside at its best'



Shropshire was indeed beautiful in July, particularly on **Saturday 4th**, when the choir made its second trip to **Church Stretton** for another very successful concert, raising money for two charities, including the R.N.L.I. This time we stopped at Ludlow for a delightful lunch and an afternoon 'at leisure'. Some of the basses indulged their love of history and culture by visiting the splendid castle, as you will see from the following photos...



'I could sing very loudly here, and no one would complain!'



John's talk going down really well!



'I'm a celebrity, let me out of here!'

Our choir members are generally shy folk, but two have been persuaded to emerge from behind their folders and share their 'musical stories' with you, namely Valerie Jones and Alistair MacLeod. We look forward to more revelations in future newsletters!



**Valerie Jones – Alto**

Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Grandmother was a piano teacher, both my parents played the piano, so I started at a very early age, always loved playing and never needed to be reminded to practise. I later took up the clarinet and reached grade eight before leaving school where I belonged to both the school orchestra and the local youth orchestra. I continued at University, and as I have moved around the country, I have always been part of an orchestra or a wind band. Currently I play for Werneth Concert Band.

I first started singing at school when I joined the school choirs. In the sixth form we did Dido and Aeneas and I was one of the witches! In my twenties I joined the local church choir singing Alto. After singing with St Georges Singers in Poynton, I joined the Laurence Singers in 2009 and am currently their Treasurer.

I still play the piano and am a self-taught organist. At our local church in Prestbury I regularly play the organ for services and am the musical director for the annual Christmas Concert, which used to run for three nights raising about £2500 for charity.



**Alistair Macleod - Tenor**

Both my parents played the piano, so music was always part of family life. At Grammar School the choir was run by the Latin teacher, and the Head of English directed choral and light opera performances. Are the days of such polymaths slipping away? I remember performing in the Mikado and visiting the D'Oyly Carte to see other G&S, leaving me with a lifelong love of their music. At University in London I joined the choir run by an extrovert Afro-Caribbean Ian Hall. We performed with Cleo Laine and John Dankworth, with Annette Crosbie narrating. Concerts were a mix of classical and exotic, involving African Drummers, a very enjoyable time.

When Jill and I married and settled in the area, choir and light opera was her escape from childcare, and this established a pattern that lasted until I sang in a scratch performance and found myself sitting next to John Healey and another Laurence Singer who immediately recognised my enormous value to their choir! I held out for a few years and then joined in 2006, and apart from being persuaded to sing Tenor rather than Baritone, have enjoyed my time with the choir ever since!

**And now for our future concerts! 2015**

- **Sat November 21<sup>st</sup>** Swann Lane URC, Cheadle Hulme, mixed programme
- **Sunday December 6<sup>th</sup>** Carols by the Tree at Dunham Massey
- **Thurs December 17<sup>th</sup>** All Saints Cheadle Hulme, Annual Christmas Concert

**2016**

- **Sat Feb 13<sup>th</sup>** Bramhall URC for Christian Aid, mixed programme
- **Sat March 19<sup>th</sup>** Altrincham Meth Church for Christie's, mixed, a provisional date so far
- **Sat April 23<sup>rd</sup>** Wilmslow URC for choir funds, Favourite Sacred Choruses
- **Sat June 18<sup>th</sup>** Bramhall Meth Church for Bramhall Ambulance Charity, a mixed programme
- **Sat Oct 8<sup>th</sup>** Wilmslow URC 'Jazz' concert with John Rotherham Trio
- **Sat Nov 26<sup>th</sup>** Dean Row Church, Christmas music and Readings
- **Sat Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>** Dunham Massey, provisional date
- **Thurs Dec 15<sup>th</sup> (or 22<sup>nd</sup>)** All Saints Cheadle Hulme – Annual Christmas Concert

Tickets for all these concerts will be available from myself, John, Cliff, or any member of the Choir, (*apart from the concerts at Dunham Massey*). So do come and enjoy our music making, and have a lovely Xmas and prosperous New Year!

**Best wishes, Peter Bowers**