

Welcome to our September Newsletter, the third in the new format. As before feedback has been positive, and contributions continue to flow! This issue allows us to reflect a little on the past, welcome 'new arrivals' and celebrate our achievements as well as look to the future, including our exciting concert of Jazz in October!

Since the last letter, we have performed three very successful concerts, singing our usual wide repertoire. However, the chance in April to sing a programme of glorious sacred choruses was pure heaven! Just before that concert we were photographed by **Jo Kaberry**, a local professional photographer. So now we have some splendid pictures of ourselves on the website and elsewhere. Here we are, revelling in our pink...



On a sadder note, this year has seen the passing of two ladies connected to the choir. **Barbara Whittaker**, wife of **Laurence**, our founder, died a few weeks short of her 100th birthday. She was a gracious lady who loved her family and garden. She regularly attended concerts until visual impairment and ill health made that difficult. **Betty Kemp** was a talented pianist who for many years accompanied

the choir. Some of us sang at her funeral, where we were privileged to hear a recording she had made of a Rachmaninov prelude, an unusual and memorable feature.

Another lady who continues to be in our thoughts is **Hilary Ward**. She is still looking for another 'Laurence Singers' to join, but has made progress with her garden



She also left us a generous donation, with which we have now purchased some new music, three splendid jazz pieces you will sing or hear in October!

Now for a profile of our own **Bernard Challand**:

'I suppose my musical tastes were formed in my teens (long ago!). Playing in the school orchestra and singing in the choir exposed me to a wide range of music, from Bach to Copeland, and although I was a science student, in the sixth form I went to a number of concerts by touring orchestras (like the Halle and CBSO) with a few friends. One of them at least became a renowned musician (Chris Hogwood, founder of the Academy of Ancient Music). Over time I came to love harmony more than melody, rhythm or lyrics, and chamber music more than large orchestras and choirs (so Beethoven's late quartets rather than his symphonies).

At university in London I could never afford to go to concerts, but in the university choir I did get the opportunity to sing Verdi's Requiem in the Royal Albert Hall – that was quite an experience! I also joined the G&S group which gave one or two performances each year. But most important to me was being selected for the 10-strong madrigal group. We sang one evening a week, always 'a capella', nothing later than about 1650, and gave no concerts or recitals; but we certainly enjoyed ourselves and it was wonderful training for sight-reading.

My next four years were spent as a post-graduate student in Canada, where I was generally too busy for much music, but I did sing with a chamber choir about twice a month. In addition during one summer I did six weeks of professional work as part of a song and dance routine for the local TV station. That was hard work! Each week there was one evening of rehearsal, one evening recording the sound, and one evening video-recording the dance routines while we lip-synched to the soundtrack. The next evening the half-hour show was broadcast. At that time it seemed to be worth the \$25 a week they paid me!

I returned to the UK and moved to Stockport in 1969, but after a while I began to get withdrawal symptoms, so joined the Maia choir. A few years later I fell out with the musical director and left. After that I, with Judith Sumner and Janet Simpson, were among the original members of the Grosvenor Singers founded by Kieron McNiff, but that did not survive after he went abroad. Judith suggested that I contact Laurence Whitaker, and the rest, as they say, is Laurence Singers'

history. At that time the LS had only about 20 members and I thought that it was just right, as was the variety of music that we performed. We still perform a good variety, and I still enjoy it, so I guess I'll carry on until I have to admit that I'm past my 'use by' date (I'm already past 'best-before!').

Earlier this month we celebrated our **charitable giving...**



Treasurer, Valerie Jones, hands over a cheque for **£500** to Rev Rob Wardle from the Macclesfield-based charity, **Cre8**. The money will help boost the charity's work supporting young people and their families living on the area's Moss Rose estate. Now celebrating its tenth anniversary, Cre8 provides a series of learning projects and other activities to encourage young people to fulfil their potential and get into employment. 'At Cre8, our work is all about empowering young people and adults to make good things happen both for themselves and their neighbourhood,' said Rev Wardle. 'We believe that everybody has something to contribute to the community, whatever their ability. We are very grateful to the Laurence Singers for their support.' In the last 12 months we have raised **£1,400** through concerts and ticket sales,

for local and national charities.-----
And now, our **new arrivals...** **Ann Grainger** has joined the altos, and husband **John** the tenors. Welcome to them both! Welcome also to **Heidi!**



Daughter to our accompanist **Lauren Hibbard**, Heidi Faye Turner was born at 4.14am on July 28th. Here she is at nearly six weeks, fit and well, starting to smile, and making all the sleepless nights worthwhile! Congratulations to all three. Covering her 'maternity leave' at the piano has been our own **Julie Holland**, and for many rehearsals **John Rotherham**, leader of the **John Rotherham Trio**, who will be playing with us at our next concert...



Here is a short resume of his career: John grew up in St. Helens and studied piano to diploma level. During his time at university he became increasingly known as a jazz pianist and since moving to the Manchester area, has played

extensively around the North-West, often accompanying visiting American and London players. John has always loved the trio format and the present players, Ian Mayer, bass, and Paul Tuite, drums, have been invaluable colleagues for many years. Most present-day jazz pianists have been influenced to some extent by Oscar Peterson and John is no exception, though a more personal style has now evolved. Their repertoire relies heavily on the Great American Song Book, but also includes some jazz originals. More recently, John has returned to his classical roots and over the last twenty years, in addition to his jazz playing, he has become much in demand in the local area as an accompanist for music festivals, examinations and recitals. And here is more about the concert!

'All That Jazz!' With the John Rotherham Trio Saturday October 8th, 7.30pm, Wilmslow URC, Alderley Rd. Wilmslow. Tickets £9 (£8conc.) 01614394293 or 01619282769

enquiries@thelaurencesingers.co.uk
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Future Concerts:
Sat Nov 26th 'Seasonal Readings and music' Dean Row Chapel

Thurs Dec 22nd Annual Christmas Concert All Saints Parish Church, Cheadle Hulme, and in 2017...

Tues April 4th 'Music at St. James' subscription concert series but open to all on the night. St James Parish Church, Gatley.

Sat April 8th 'Enjoy a Full English Programme of Music with the Laurence Singers' Wilmslow URC.

Sat May 13th Concert shared with a Balalaika Orchestra Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church.

And we are still available for bookings later in 2017!

Best wishes, Peter