



# NEWSLETTER

October 2003

## 10th SEASON

Moving on .... That describes perfectly the past few weeks and, incidentally, the reason for a Newsletter issued later than is usual. Transition from the former school to the new building is complete, demolition of the old school buildings is now well underway and we are settling into much more comfortable surroundings with greater space and excellent equipment. The Choral Society moves on too – into its 10<sup>th</sup> season, no mean feat in the life of a school. We estimate that between three and four hundred students have belonged to the choir at some time during that period. More about how we plan to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary later.

As usual the last concert season was a busy one; in fact the diary was full before the season began. There have been numerous concerts at local churches, many in aid of charity, participation in a concert at Symphony Hall Birmingham and the annual

Production to name but a few and the season drew to a close with two events marking the centenary of the birth of John Wesley. One of our aims is to provide a varied programme throughout the year that enthralls both performer and listener and this was our intention again last season.

Many of our more established members who remain with us whilst at Sixth Form College leave us at this time of year to take up degree courses. We wish Richard Skilbeck well as he moves to Leeds to study music. Quite a number of our members have also moved on to Sixth Form colleges and we are very pleased that many of them have chosen to stay with us. Whilst we should never become complacent about recruiting new members it has always been the case that more students wish to join the choir than there are places available and so we are very pleased that quite a number have joined us in recent months. We hope their stay with us will be a long and happy one.

We begin this season with a total membership of 37. When we began in 1994 there were 23. Our membership fluctuates constantly but we fixed a membership limit of 40 some years ago and one of the tasks facing us over the next few months is recruiting male members into the tenor and bass sections.

## PRAISE INDEED!

In June 40 students from Summerhill, many of them Choral Society members, participated in a singing day entitled 'Youth in Unisong' at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. Several eminent composers and conductors led the day and we worked particularly with Bob Chilcott, a contemporary of John Rutter, whose choral work is becoming increasingly popular and Gillian Dibden, a former music adviser to Berkshire Education Authority. All the music was learnt on the day and she particularly singled out our students for their smartness and also the

quality of their singing, so much so that she had the choir repositioned for the concert with Summerhill at the centre. We all left Symphony Hall with tips for better technique coming out of our ears, but the fruits of that are already making a difference to the way we sing.

## CHORAL EVENSONG

We shall be singing Choral Evensong again this year at St. Philip's Cathedral, Birmingham, on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October at 4pm. If you have not attended this event before it's well worth the effort. The cathedral itself really is a haven of peace within a busy city, but also busy lives. Rosemary Gripton will conduct the choir again on this occasion and the music will include Dyson's 'Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis' in F, Psalm 145, Rutter's 'Prayer of St. Patrick' and 'The Heavens Are Telling' from Haydn's 'Creation'. The Preces and Responses are being sung to a setting by Oxley. We were very encouraged last year to see a good number of our supporters and hope that some of you will be able to join us again.

## CANCER RESEARCH

There will be a concert in aid of Cancer Research at Summerhill School on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November at 7.30pm. The local support

group for Macmillan Nurses are organising this event and I know they would greatly value your support. The evening will be one of 'Songs from the Shows' with choral and solo items. Tickets are on sale at £5 adults and £2 children which includes a glass of wine or soft drink at the interval from Mrs P. Jones on 01384 274339. Tickets will be on sale at the door but it is always helpful for the organisers to have an idea of numbers in advance for catering and chairs etc.

## CHRISTMAS

Our Christmas Carolcade has always been one of the most popular concerts of the season. There are two Christmas concerts this year, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December at Brierley Hill Methodist Church and the Carolcade on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December at Central Methodist Church, Dudley. Both concerts begin at 7.30pm. On December 11<sup>th</sup> we shall be joined by the choir of Glynne Primary School. Tickets will be on sale at £3 from early November from members of the choir or at the doors on the evening of the concerts. We do our best to make this a family concert and as usual there will be a variety of seasonal music, audience carols, mince pies at the interval and a visit from Father Christmas as well as items from the Glynne choir. Do join us if you are able.

## NEW CD

In March the choir made a recording of music for their new CD which is entitled 'With A Song In My Heart'. Now in the final process of duplication we hope to have this on sale at £6 after half term but certainly by the end of November in time for Christmas. It contains a variety of sacred and secular items plus pieces sung by the ladies choir and gentlemen's chorus.

## Website

Did you know you could visit us on the Internet? Jenny Sheriff, a member of the choir helps maintain the website for us with concert information and venue directions, repertoire information and much more. The address is [www.summerhillchoral.co.uk](http://www.summerhillchoral.co.uk)

## 10th ANNIVERSARY

Plans are well in hand for the celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in 2004. This is a special year for us and a series of concerts and events beginning in January have been planned. A brochure with the details will be circulated at our Christmas concerts and in the January mailing of the Newsletter.