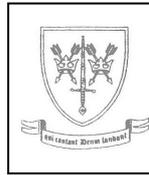


Tone's Last Tidings

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St Edmundsbury Male Voice Choir
Patron: The Rt. Hon The Earl of Iveagh
President: Paul Deane
Vice Presidents: John Balaam, Dr John Meers
Registered Charity No. 1028123

'Even the best of good friends have at last to part,
Time waits for no man, and everything comes to an end.

Wonderful moments quickly fly, just for the moment you and I have to say good-bye' (Lilac Time)



It has been a privilege and my pleasure to be allowed to be the titular head of our Choral family for the last three years, and for that I thank you all. This Choir of ours, now well into its 30th year, continues to grow not only in number but in range, depth, musicality and comradeship. We as members have our own part to play in this growth. By singing together, by playing together and by learning together we can take our choir forward and upward to new musical heights and renown.

St Botolph's Church, Colchester, Saturday 24 March



It was the ruins of the Priory that caught the eye as we drove into the car park, not the church, but once inside, it was 'Wow' and in the warm-up the acoustic was even 'Wower'. I was told that we had sung there before, but not in my short time

with the Choir. The Choir opened the concert with *Aberystwyth* followed by *Cantique de Jean Racine*, *An American Trilogy* complete with organ which lifts this piece to greater heights, *Amen*, *Bridge over troubled water*. The *Easter Hymn* with David Sadler as soloist ended our first half set. The Swing Express Band finished the first half with *Strike up the Band*, *String of pearls*, *Nice work if you can get it* with Norwood Simpson providing the vocals, *Tuxedo Junction* and *Brazil* took us foot tapping into the interval.

Having been suitably refreshed, the Band kicked off the second half with more swing time favourites - *This could be the start*, *St Louis Blues* with Steve Holgate on solo trumpet, two vocal numbers - *On the sunny side of the street* and *Elmer's Tune*. The Band's finale was *Opus One*. Our final set was a Bacharach quartet of *The look of love*, *Anyone who had a heart*, *Walk on by* and *What the world needs now*. *Angels* and *Mustang Sally* rounded off the evening.

The concert, organised by the Rotary Club of Colchester Forum, was in aid of the St Botolph's Tower Appeal and other Rotary Charities and was sponsored by the Hunnaball Family Funeral Group. Tony F

From Roger Gray's daughter, Virginia Finch

What a funeral service! Dad would have loved it all and the extra of *Morte Criste* as he left the church was brilliant. We have had so many compliments regarding the choir's singing, everybody enjoyed it. When you have others singing well, even the hymns get a good airing. It was a celebration for Dad and I think we all achieved that. Please let all those who gave up their time to come and sing a big 'thank you'; I know this is difficult so it's even more appreciated. The choir was very important to Dad, he always said he "found" you a bit late in his life. However he really did enjoy being part of it all and to be able to sing such wonderful music. Kindest regards



Roger Gray Second Tenor

2 May 1928 – 21 February 2018
R.I.P.



A small number of choir members were saddened to attend the funeral of Roger Gray, a long-standing second tenor, on Friday 23 March at St Mary's Church, Rougham. We were privileged to sing a few of his favourite songs, and bid him 'Au Revoir' in a way that I'm sure he would have wanted. Roger was born with his twin brother Michael in Truro, Cornwall, to Mrs Mary Ansell. They were both promptly handed over to Mrs Ethel and Mr Frederick Cousins, of Tye Green, Glemsford, who remained their guardians. He led a very active life from an early age, being involved in sports which included football, cricket, boxing and tennis. Some of his exploits during his younger days would make our hair stand on end today! He attended Glemsford School, and was by no means a 'model pupil'! On leaving school he took employment in Glemsford as an apprentice carpenter and continued his sporting activities. Aged 16 he joined the army cadets at Glemsford, (4th Battalion, The Suffolk Regiment) and could often be seen on parade in Bury St Edmunds on Sunday mornings. On 28 May 1946, aged 18, he joined the Royal Marines at Lympstone, Devon. After leaving the Marines, Roger married Rosemary, from Sudbury. They spent some time in Wimbledon, where she was a teacher. They had three daughters, Louise, Deborah and Virginia. On returning to Suffolk some years later, Rosemary was diagnosed with cancer and passed away. A lectern made in her memory, and used at the school where she had been teaching is still in use today by the choir. Roger continued with his sporting activities, including boxing and tennis. He was still playing tennis just before Christmas 2017, at the age of 89! An accomplished artist, he painted over 100 pictures, some of which were sold and are now spread in various parts of the world, including America. He joined SEMVC on 16 March 2006 as a top tenor, and in February 2009, as his voice deepened with age, moved to the second tenors. He kept us all amused with his 'suffolk oomer'. Roger was always first to arrive for practice on Thursdays, and would set out the chairs for us. In 2013 he published an autobiography, titled 'Git Ahind – Om Fust,' a humorous and touching account of his young life. I'm sure many of us have read it; if you haven't, you should. Our sincere condolences go to his family and close friends at this time. Den Cartwright

Reflections and praise, from Barry Cole

Having reflected on the funeral of Roger Gray, I am compelled to express my thoughts and admiration of a few people. Although not considered good form to blow one's own trumpet, credit should be given where credit is due. In my humble opinion, once again SEMVC maintained our good reputation and we acquitted ourselves so well at the funeral of one of our own.

The basses were magnificent, as always (!), the baritones did an incredibly sterling job despite their vastly depleted numbers, and Paul Davis led us expressively well, but my main area of praise goes to both tenor lines. Positioned in the choir stalls meant I was able to hear clearly both tenor parts for the first time since singing in the choir. It was a joy to hear and makes me realise what I am missing when being part of the choir.

I recommend everyone to make an effort to listen as part of the audience. It is an ideal reminder of how good we really can be. And I'm sure we are better at concerts than at rehearsals. We always seem to raise our game.

The tenors must always have a difficult job when competing with the dark, rumbling undertones of the lower voices. So for them to be able to rise over the top like a rolling mist over a stormy, growling sea, and considering their reduced numbers, shows their depth and strength. Well done tenors, you have earned my respect and admiration.

Suffolk Constabulary MVC, 50th anniversary concert, Saturday 14 April, Ipswich

The Constabulary Choir invited us and Essex Police and Hertfordshire Police Choirs (both mixed choirs) to join in their celebrations. Following joint and single choir rehearsals as well as the logistics of four choirs moving off and on to the stage, we were treated to a marvellous Birthday tea. With no afterglow we held our own, sans alcohol, in the gap between tea and performance time.

The eclectic evening's programme was compered by Radio Suffolk broadcaster Rachel Sloane. Our offerings were *Cantique de Jean Racine* and *A Bacharach Medley* as well as joining the Constabulary in *Morte Criste*, again with the organ at full pelt in the last verse. Tony F

From Roley Wilson (Chairman, Suffolk Constabulary MVC):- *We have been overwhelmed by the very positive and enthusiastic response from the audience who clearly loved it. The participation of all the other choirs made it very special. It was a great deal to ask of you with a busy afternoon before the concert but what a great performance it was. Coming together shows how we all share the same values and passions about singing and our mutual respect for each other's high standards. Thank you.*

Dates for your Diary

Th 31 May - The Suffolk Show, Ipswich

Sa 9 June - Concert with Men2Sing, St Mary's Church, Newmarket, CB8 0HP, in aid of church funds

Sa 16 June - Vauxhall MVC 75th celebration concert with Wycombe Orpheus and King's Lynn MVCs, The Square Methodist Church, Dunstable, LU6 3SN

Sa 7 July - Mini concert, 2-3 pm, Relay for Life, Nowton Park

Th 12 July - Elmswell Over 55s Club, Blackbourne Centre, Elmswell, IP30 9GY

F 27 - Tu 31 July - Welsh Tour

Sa 22 September - Concert, Kedington Community Centre, CB9 7QQ, in aid of Kedington Air Memorial Fund

Sa 13 October - Concert, Castle Manor Academy, Haverhill, CB9 9JE, with TUBE and Boys That Sing

Sa 17 November - Concert, St John's Church, BSE, IP33 1JY, in aid of 'Every Heart Matters' appeal, West Suffolk Hospital

Visit of our friends from Werdorf, Germany

What a fantastic week-end. It was full on fun from Thursday through to the early hours of Sunday morning. For me it started with welcoming drinks with the party at the Dragonfly Hotel on Thursday, followed by a trip to Colchester. Then came Sing For Your Supper and what an eye-opener that was. There were Seven Little Girls canoodling with Ivor, A Pirate King, The Phantom of the Opera, Fiddler on the Roof, a poem in German and English, a pantomime Dame, a parody song about me, a proposal (and acceptance), a song about murderous widows, our Vice Chairman sang his own C.V., the Octet dreamed of Georgie Girl, and lots more. Tables were groaning under the weight of food and the free bar did a roaring trade. On Saturday morning a walking tour of Bury was arranged for our guests; it was surprising that after all the years of the exchanges how many of them had not seen Bury, as usually they explore further afield.

Following afternoon rehearsal sessions the concert at St Mary's, started at 7:00 p.m. As host we started the feast of music with our set: *Every time I feel the spirit*, *Shenandoah* (our first performance of a lovely piece) and *Bridge over troubled water*. Reiner Genz, maestro of the Werdorf Male Voice Choir, introduced his first organ piece: *Concerto Del Signor Gentili*.

Allegro, a mixed Choir and conducted by Sandra Weiler, were next up. They sang *Die Gedanken sind frei*, *The Lord bless you and keep you*, *Ubi caritas* and ended their set with a lovely arrangement of *The Sound of Silence*. Eleven members of *Männergesangverein 1865 Werdorf* mounted the platform and gave us five unaccompanied 15th century motets: *Cantate Domino*, *In Nomine Jesu*, *Sanctus* and *Es strahlen hell die Gerechten*. The two MVCs joined forces to sing *The water is wide*, with Mark, as usual, drawing the best out of both choirs.

Having been refreshed during the interval the MGV Werdorf sang five pieces from the Romantic period: *Liebeslied im garten*, *Schifferlied*, *Mondnacht*, *Abendfrieden* and *Männer suchen stets zu naschen*. Reiner's organ solo was *Bolero de Concert* by Lefebure-Wely, a friend and pupil of Camille Saint-Saens. *Allegro* entertained us with four more items: *Beyond the sea*, *So soll es bleiben*, *I'll be there* and *Angels*. For our final set we sang: *Cantique de Jean Racine*, *Seal Lullaby* and *I'll never fall in love again*.

With presentations and thanks given, the two MVCs under Reiner's baton sang *Silcher's Jauchzet dem Herrn*. Having cleared away the staging the party de-camped to the Rugby Club for some very welcome refreshment and a thoroughly enjoyable afterglow, with all three choirs combining in the singing of many old favourites. Our Werdorf friends had presented the Choir with a mysterious heavy package; on opening it at the Rugby Club it transpired to be 6 bottles of 'The Spirit of Werdorf'. The plan is to taste it at the Summer Barbeque - watch out for the notices.

Tony F