



Members' Newsletter

New Year 2014

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Dear Everybody,

Wishing you all a very happy New Year! It's only just over a fortnight since our last official engagement, when we, and the Songsters, entertained a packed Concert audience – how nice to be able to say that – our carols echoed round the spacious halls of the Beeches, and we contributed our carolling to the Christmas Tree Festival at Union Church. Comments at all three show that we made more friends for BCS, as well as enjoying ourselves in the process. Moreover we made a profit on the Concert, which was shared between ourselves and the Songsters, and still enabled us to hand £150 to the Church for their current charities, Parkinsons UK and Home-Start.

However, it's less than a week now till our first rehearsal of 2014, on Monday next, 6 January, so here is a rundown of what is in store for us. We'll begin straight away preparing for our performance of Brahms' Requiem on Saturday 5 April in the Cathedral. This is part of a Brahms programme, and the Requiem forms the second half. However, we are also taking part in two concerts during the Brentwood Festival, as follows:

Elgar's "*Spirit of England*" written in 1916 at the height of WWI will be the choral piece at the concert on 5th July at Brentwood Cathedral, and Karl Jenkins' "*The Armed Man – A Mass for Peace*", will be the choral work which will be performed at the Brentwood Centre on 12th July. We will therefore need to fit in some rehearsal time of these works before Easter. You may have noticed that our Spring term of rehearsals as per our Calendar finishes on 24 March (because after that the school is closed for holidays). However we may need to arrange a rehearsal at another venue on 31 March, as we have so much to cover.

So now here is an important message from Bob Scott and Liz Biebuyck, wearing their Brentwood Arts Council hats:

*"Most of you will already know that there will be a **singing day on Saturday 10 May** to kick off the rehearsals for the choral concerts which will take place on 5th and 12th July and will introduce the singers who intend to take part in the concerts to the music. We say "concerts" because we hope very much that all local choirs will want to take part in both events. We realise that this is a big "ask" but this is an important week for the Arts in Brentwood and we want to demonstrate to as many people as possible how much is going on so that they can become involved themselves as either participants or, in the case of the performing arts, as future audience members. This is therefore a great opportunity for all of us to show what we have to offer and from it to build new audience and membership, something which we all want to do.*

*The Singing Day will be held at **Becket Keys School in Sawyers Hall Lane** and we have been advised that there is plenty of parking. It will commence **at 10 am** and will be led by Tim Hooper who is the MD of Hutton & Shenfield Choral Society; and will be conducting the concert on 12th July. The morning will be taken up with work on *The Armed Man*. At this stage we are*

anticipating the singing to continue until 3pm but further discussions have to take place before we can confirm this. It is expected that there will be at least one further joint rehearsal, probably on a Saturday nearer the Festival Week, but that too is to be confirmed. “

The cost of participating in the Singing Day will probably be £10 - £12 per head (depending upon numbers) and this will cover hall hire, professional fees and music hire and it is hoped that, providing there is a good attendance, there will be no further charge for any future rehearsals.

Important: We are asked to let BAC know in January how many of us will be taking part, so that hire copies can be ordered. A list will therefore be circulating on 6 and 13 January. Can you consult your diaries without delay, please!

We will of course also use our Monday rehearsals to prepare for both concerts. For those who want to buy their own copies the RRP of *The Armed Man* is £13.99 but can be bought more cheaply. The *Spirit of England* RRP is £7.95. If you sign up on the list, it will be assumed that you need a hire copy, unless you indicate otherwise. Self-help to assist with note-bashing is available for *The Armed Man* from www.learnchoralmusic.co.uk and www.choralia.net free of charge and both are available as CD/MP3 from www.choraline.com.

As you know, we have appointed **David Todd**, (who is Nick's successor as Director of Music at Wanstead Church), to stand in for Mich during her maternity leave. This is expected to start sometime during February, and Mich and David are consulting to ensure continuity of the work at the changeover.

Finally, we were all very sorry to hear of Ruth 's fall early this month. The latest news of her, via David, as of 30 December, is that her broken left hip has now been pinned and she was transferred from Basildon Hospital to Mountnessing Court (Room 2), 240 Mountnessing Rd, Billericay on Christmas Eve for recuperation and assessment. She is mobile on a walking frame, and David is hopeful that she could well be back home in about a week, provided that some home support can be organised. Visitors welcomed and she is very grateful for all the cards and best wishes that she has received.

Hoping to see you all refreshed and ready to go next Monday. Please look out for any new members who may join us. And don't hesitate to encourage potential new members to come and try us out. We all have a good story to tell about the enjoyment we are getting from our singing, under Mich's guidance.

Best wishes

David, Liz and Robin