



**Patron: Samuel West**  
**Music Director: Darius Battiwalla**  
Registered Charity No. 518073

## Summer Newsletter 2010

The season was off to a thrilling start with a performance of Haydn's wonderful 'Creation' with Manchester Camerata under the baton of Paul Brough whose knowledge and enthusiasm for the work was so inspiring.

Although fed up because I had insufficient marks to sing in this concert I was, therefore, eligible to buy a ticket and enjoy the performance from the auditorium. It was amazing and served to reinforce the feeling of privilege I have in belonging to such an impressive choir, and being able to share the exhilaration of singing such powerful works.

Soon after that we had our Carol Concert which was very different from our usual format. The young people from the Sheffield Music Academy joined us and we were in awe of their talent if rather unsure of their choice of repertoire for the occasion. It was good to forge links with young singers whose ability and enthusiasm could well carry the choral traditions into the future and we look forward to sharing the platform again with them on future occasions.

The inclusion of Joe Stilgo in the programme had a mixed response from both Choir and audience alike but nothing came between us and the Black Dyke Band. Their rendition of Darius's superb arrangement of 'O Holy Night' was tremendous - with a little help from us of course.

And then there was Ian MacMillan.....

Christmas, as always, had a fair sprinkling of charity events too.

We had a carol concert in aid of the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice whose organisers were most appreciative of our contribution.

There was the moving Carol Service in Sheffield Cathedral arranged by St.Luke's Hospice which has become a tradition in Sheffield.

Tickhill Carols was fun as usual and was a very convivial occasion - and wasn't it great to have Dan (our former Accompanist) join us as organist? If you've never managed to sing at Tickhill do try to come and see what you're missing.

Once again we helped British Heart Research to raise funds by singing carols at Sheffield Rail Station; and an interesting innovation was singing carols to bring a bit of "Christmas magic" to the Sheffield Christmas Market in the Peace Gardens.



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As is most often the case with these smaller concerts we are indebted to Rachel Copley for taking on the role of conductor. She does it with such musicality and good humour it is a joy to participate. Thank you Rachel. You're a star!

With Christmas over we were soon back in harness with rehearsals for the Brahms German Requiem, a major work which requires a lot of stamina, both mental and physical. We enjoyed meeting Ewa Strusinska informally early in the rehearsal schedule and then unusually, two piano rehearsals. Coupled with coaching in German pronunciation with the help of Susanne Staub we achieved a very memorable performance. This concert, performed in memory of our late President Tony Pickles, launched our 75th Anniversary Year.

We are indebted to Peter Miles who has ably taken on the designing of our leaflets and any other publicity which we require. It is he who has re-jigged our logo for the duration of our Anniversary year. He is a professional in this field but makes no charge to us for his time and expertise so, many thanks, Peter.

My apologies to all of you who placed car stickers advertising the Brahms concert on your rear windscreens. You'll be gratified to know that I, too, am having difficulty removing the adhesive. Don't blame Peter - I was the one with the double-sided tape!

Thanks to Darius and his contacts with Nick Childs we were invited to participate in a live recording of Karl Jenkins' 'The Armed Man' at the Birmingham Symphony Hall alongside Halifax Choral Society. This was to take place in April and so we had quite a complicated rehearsal schedule to prepare for two concerts in fairly rapid succession. A financial benefit as a result of this is that we are being given a batch of DVDs so the sale of these will boost our coffers very nicely.

No sooner had preparations for the Requiem started than we were taken over with 'Star Wars' fever. Quite out of the blue came a request for a choir of forty singers to sing at Sheffield Arena for a full nine minutes as part of the international Star Wars in Concert tour. Darius was brought in on this and before we knew where we were we had four performances under our belt and a very healthy bank balance. Thanks in no small measure are due to John Spence for organising the workforce. I think he may just about have recovered now. Thank you, too, to all those who did not sing in 'Star Wars' for putting up with our exuberance.

At this point, I had planned to thank Peter (the coach) Clark most sincerely for his tireless efforts in organising the transport for Star Wars. Peter's untimely death during the break has been a terrible shock to us all, and our thoughts continue to be with his widow, Heather, and the rest of his family. Given that the last thing we wanted was to lose our good friend and colleague in this way, it was hopefully fitting that we were invited by the family to sing for Peter's funeral. Nearly sixty members of the Chorus were able to take part, and thanks to you all and again to Rachel for conducting us and also for helping us to approach this most difficult of occasions in an appropriate manner. We continue to be in contact with Heather, and hope that our participation in the funeral service may have been some comfort to her.

The launch of our 75th Anniversary also heralded the first sales of the book written by Bill Smyllie, our longest serving member. This is a superb history of the Chorus with lovely photographs and if you haven't bought one (or two - Christmas is coming!) then I strongly recommend that you do. Buy at rehearsals in the new season, order via the website, or for those without internet access please use the attached order form. Bill has asked that all profits from the sale of the book go to the Chorus. We are most grateful to Bill for his generosity and all the hours of work he has put in to producing this excellent document.

Those who represented us at Bochum's fantastic music festival, "Sing! Day of Song" had a wonderful time and came home with some hilarious tales of their adventures. Get a flavour of the event by following the links on the Bochum page of our website [www.sheffieldphil.org](http://www.sheffieldphil.org).

There were ideas gleaned too, for promotional events for our 75th Anniversary year, so watch this space! Janet Hoyle was instrumental in organising the Bochum trip and our warmest thanks from the whole Chorus, as well as those who participated, go to her.

As a result of the Bochum event we have all been learning new music in order to increase our repertoire when we take part in smaller concerts/charity events. The folk songs etc. which we have used for a number of years really do need to be replaced by something different and the madrigals which the Bochum people were required to learn seemed a good starting point. Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus can't be accused of being hide bound!

The season was rounded off by a Teddy Bears Picnic in Endcliffe Park. A family picnic has become an annual event thanks to Angela Argenzio, our very capable Social Events Officer, and this year (our 75th Anniversary year remember) it was decided to open it to all - provided each person brought along a teddy or two. On the day we dithered rather over the weather and decided to take a risk. The rain held off until about half an hour before the scheduled finish time so the day wasn't spoilt and those who brought a picnic and teddy had a very pleasant and enjoyable afternoon. Thank you Angela, for arranging the day, and also to Rachel Mallaband who also played a large part in organising the event. Congratulations to Frances Lavender, whose teddy, at age 83, was the oldest bear in attendance!

The 2010-11 Season promises to keep us busy:

It starts on Tuesday 7th September 2010 at 7.00pm. **NB Rehearsals during September and the first week in October will be held at the Sheffield Springs Academy on Hurlfield Road, Sheffield S12 2SF.** This is an excellent venue with some very good facilities - and a piano which is in tune, so no excuses. There is ample free and supervised parking on site and the Manor Top tram stop is about 300 metres away. Julie has checked out the local hostelry across the road and declared it up to our post rehearsal requirements.

Our first concert of the season is Elgar's epic Dream of Gerontius on 4th November with the Halle and conducted by James Burton. It is expected that the piano rehearsal will be on Tuesday 26th October and the orchestral rehearsal on Saturday 30th October in the afternoon at Studio 7 in Manchester. When this has been confirmed it will appear on the website and I will of course make appropriate announcements at rehearsals.

As you will be aware already we have been invited by the BBC to take part in two 'Songs of Praise' programmes which will involve our being available on five separate days at the end of September and the beginning of October. It will be very interesting for us to see how these programmes are recorded and it will be an exciting way of raising our profile nationally.

Some of you will know by now that this year we are performing not just one carol concert in the City Hall but two. Both these concerts will be on 12th December, one in the afternoon and the second in the evening. We will be performing with Grimethorpe Colliery Band (conductor James Gourlay), and our compère once more is Ian Macmillan. Light refreshments will be provided between concerts. I'll supply more details nearer the time.

Earlier in December, on Thursday the 9th, the British Heart Research charity has once again invited us to sing carols outside Sheffield station. Again, another enjoyable way of raising our profile.

In the New Year we will be rehearsing for Mozart's Requiem. The concert is on the 25th February with Manchester Camerata under Nicholas Kraemer so I think we can anticipate a challenging and moving performance.

We have been invited to Join the Leeds Philharmonic Chorus for a performance of Verdi's Requiem on Saturday 21 May in Leeds – further details nearer the time.

The last concert of the season is on 3rd June and is William Walton's Henry V and it is hoped that our patron Sam West will be taking part so we may get a chance to meet him. This concert will be performed with the Hallé and Rory MacDonald will be our conductor. Please note that as, for Gerontius, there may be a full rehearsal with orchestra on Saturday 28 May.

That just leaves us with our 75th Birthday Party on Saturday 18th June. Some of our friends from Bochum are hoping to join us and plans are well under way for a wonderful celebration in the City Hall Ballroom to round off our Anniversary year. Please find full details at the end of this letter.

The Committee has events planned throughout the season to help make this a very special year so let's make sure we enjoy every minute of it.

I hope you are all having a relaxing summer break and that the weather is kind to you when you most need it.

With best wishes,

Janet

### **Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus's Grand 75th Celebration**

In an attempt to celebrate our 75th Anniversary in a spectacular way that can hopefully include all of our members, we have booked the City Hall ballroom to hold a short concert followed by a party. This will take place on Saturday 18th June 2011 and will include a buffet and the opportunity to dance to live music.

The cost will be £27 for both members of the audience and singers. 2 tickets will be available for each Chorus member initially with a purchasing deadline of 1st December. Those tickets remaining will be offered to honorary members, past chorus members and existing members who may wish to purchase more.

We have tried to keep cost down for individuals but also wish to hold an event befitting the occasion, we have therefore decided to put some of Miriam's bequest towards it. We hope that some of our good friends from the Bochum Philharmonic Chorus will join us for the celebration as our guests, we will therefore cover the cost of their tickets.

We hope that everyone will support this occasion and help to make it a memorable evening in the history of the Chorus.

### **Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus in Profile Magazine**

Some of you may have seen this article in the August edition. If not, you may like to obtain a copy or read it online via our website [www.sheffieldphil.org](http://www.sheffieldphil.org).

### **From the Chorus Chairman:**

I will probably say more about these matters in the Chorus's Annual Report and at the AGM, but just wanted to thank all members most sincerely for so willingly participating in what has been a very busy and challenging season. Anyone who has managed to take part in everything on offer will have performed on no less than eighteen occasions, which is a remarkable amount of work when many of us have full enough lives before we even get to rehearsal.

Thank you also to everyone who has helped to raise funds, made individual contributions in terms of time and/or money, and made useful suggestions about how we run the Chorus. The current climate presents us with a particular set of challenges as we start to make a specific financial contribution to our concerts.

I am very grateful to various people for sound advice and guidance as we have worked our way towards our first season under the new arrangements, particularly Darius and the Committee. To me, there has seemed to be an excellent sense of teamwork and of putting the long-term interests of the Chorus above more immediate considerations, and I do hope that our deliberations and negotiations will prove to have been wise ones in securing the future of the Chorus so far as we reasonably can. We will continue to keep members as fully informed as we can of these developments, and as always, if you have thoughts, comments, opinions and suggestions on anything relating to these or other Chorus management matters, please continue to bring them to any Officer or member of the Committee.

Do enjoy what remains of the summer break, and see you AT THE SPRINGS ACADEMY on Tuesday 7 September.

Julie