

## THE KEYWORTH CHOIR AT 50: HARMONY IN THE HEAT!

The Annual Summer Concert by the Keyworth Choir was held in the Village Hall on 29<sup>th</sup> June, which turned out to be the hottest day of the year (so far!). The rising temperature was accompanied by rising anticipation of the performance in this, the Choir's 50<sup>th</sup> year since its formation. As always, expectations were fully met, as the choir gave a joyful, diverse and harmonious performance – perfect for a glorious summer's evening.

The programme opened with a medley of all the favourites from Rodgers and Hammerstein's musical *The King and I*. This certainly brought back memories for us, as we'd seen this musical performed on the London stage over 40 years ago with Yul Brynner himself playing the lead role, on what was an equally hot summer's evening! And to think, the Keyworth Choir was then just in its infancy....

The concert continued with a moving rendition of *Amazing Grace* by the sopranos and altos, followed by the whole choir performing some late-Victorian/Edwardian classics in the form of Elgar's *As Torrents in Summer* and Lehar's *Merry Widow Waltz*. As pointed out by the Choir's long-serving conductor, Colin Russell, the Elgar was particularly apt given the very different weather we'd experienced earlier in the month, with continuous down-pours!

It is always a very nice feature of the summer concert to have solo and small-group performances interspersed with the Choir's numbers. This year, Linda Evans played Fauré on her flute, Zoe Tomlinson and Colin Russell each sang solos and the Barbershop Quartet of Jenny Cook, Colin Russell, Peter Burnham and Alan Morrison delivered two numbers in close harmony, including *The Deadwood Stage* from *Calamity Jane* in memory of the recently deceased Doris Day. An integral and indispensable part of the Keyworth Choir is its one-man-orchestra, Alec McGregor, with his virtuosic command of (multiple) keyboards. This year he gave a solo performance of the overture from *The Wizard of Oz* – literally delivering a full orchestral performance!

Several other well-known favourites were performed by the Choir, from 'laid-back' Burt Bacharach to the emotionally-charged *You raise me up*. The Keyworth Choir has previously performed the latter song together with the Feignies Choir, with whom there has been a long and most amicable association. The last twinning visit of the Choirs took place in Feignies earlier this year. We noted that this latest rendition of *You raise me up* was sung without a French accent!

The concert climaxed with three numbers to raise the emotions (and the temperature!) still further, taken straight from the terraces of Twickenham and Anfield. A haunting and intriguingly-scored rendition of *Swing low, sweet chariot* was followed by Parry's *Jerusalem* and, finally, a soaring performance of *You'll never walk alone*. The evening was completed with celebratory refreshments and a birthday cake to mark the Choir's half century. In addition, an incredible and interesting display of photos of the choir and its members, plus

concert programmes and posters, triggered memories from across the years. Many thanks to Jenny Cook, in particular, for compiling this lovely archive.

Colin Russell has been the conductor of the Choir for thirty-six years and, as he said in his closing remarks, the Choir's popularity and longevity owes much to its ethos of being a friendly, open and welcoming group for anyone to join who just wants to share the joy of singing and the enrichment it brings to our lives and communities.

Sue and Ian Todd