

MUSIC IN ST MARY'S OVER EASTER 2010



Wow – it has taken quite a while to come back down to earth!! We tried to make Easter 2010 a very special occasion, not only because it was Easter, but because it saw the last services of Andrew Malcolm, who has been our Director of Music for the last 25 years.

On Good Friday a choir of 85 present and former choristers and a Brass Band of 25 present and former players gave a Devotional Offering of music for Good Friday. The evening started with two pieces for Brass Band by Bach and Pezel and the Bach “Agnus Dei” sung by the Choir. The atmospheric “Lamentations of Jeremiah” by Bairstow followed, which is in the form of a psalm with three wonderful interjections of “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord your God.” David Cook then played “O Lamm Gottes unschuldig” on the Organ and everyone sang the hymn “The Royal Banners Forward Go”. Next the Ladies and the Junior Choir sang the haunting first movement of the Pergolesi Stabat Mater and then the Brass, the Choir and the Organ all took their turn with Bach’s “Wir Danken” (We Bless Thee). Good Friday is not complete without “O Sacred Head” which was sung as a congregational hymn. Then there was a short break whilst the Brass Group moved their instruments away and then the Choir sang Fauré’s Requiem. This is a great favourite of Andrew’s which most of the Choir has sung under his baton many times before, but some were boy choristers when they last sang ten or so years ago! The performance was really moving and many have told me how much they enjoyed the whole evening. We are grateful to Sian Newman and Robin Moore for singing the solo parts so beautifully. Afterwards we had a Reception in the Parish Room, where any folk not able to be present on Sunday were able to meet with Andrew and say their farewells. On Saturday morning Andrew told me that he had been really pleased with the performances, which was great encouragement for Easter Sunday!

A few of our visitors joined us on Easter Sunday morning, so a choir bursting at the seams sang the 10 o’clock service to welcome in the most important day in the Church year! Choral Evensong was however the main focus for us. The large Choir and Brass Band let rip! The Band played for 20 minutes before the service and the Choir and Brass together performed the big double choir Wood in F setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimitis and the anthem “O Clap Your Hands” by Vaughan Williams. It was a wonderful service and probably the largest congregation we have had for a Choral Evensong in the whole 25 years of Andrew’s leadership! We hope that everyone, especially those who do not normally attend that service, enjoyed the experience and will come to Choral Evensong again! After the service, Gill Gibson and Gill Lovegrove had masterminded refreshments in Church and we started the presentations to Andrew. The Head Chorister of the Junior Choir, Alison Lawrence, made the first presentation and I, as Chairman of the SMMA made the second. The SMMA presented a Loyal Service Medal from the RSCM engraved with Andrew’s details and a book entitled Organ-isms, which we hope will amuse! Daniel King represented the former Choristers and presented a bound book of memories which he had compiled over several months. The Church Wardens both spoke and then presented some photo mugs with views of the Church. These were all token gifts. The Former Brass Players and Choristers, the present Brass Players and Choristers and the whole congregation pooled their gifts so we were able to give Andrew one sizeable cheque.

This was a fitting tribute to a Director of Music who has given many hours of service to music at St Mary’s over the years. He has introduced Church Music and trained many, both children and adults, enabling us to worship God in playing and singing. We will miss him greatly and wish him a long and happy retirement. Lesley A Green