

# Guildford Philharmonic Choir

## NEWSLETTER

Editor: Margaret Dentskevich

November 2000

Issue No. 5



### SUCCESS !!



#### — REVIEWS OF THE LAST TWO CONCERTS

##### **Guildford Cathedral, 28th November, 2000.**

Surrey Advertiser, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2000



##### **“Magnificent Mozart**

One could speculate endlessly over why Mozart never finished the great C Minor Mass.....But what remains is indeed magnificent. Its performance by the Guildford Philharmonic Choir was the climax of a memorable evening at the Cathedral, last Saturday.

The quality of the choir was apparent from the outset, in a suitably dramatic performance of Haydn's motet *Insanae et vanae curae* which alternates between the stormy and the soothing.....

Under Jeremy Backhouse, the choir sang with a conviction that would have warmed the composer's heart. In the complex runs of the *Cum Sancto Spiritu* fugue they were well drilled and flexible in tone and dynamic. The *Qui Tollis* contains a wonderful passage of sinking, chromatic harmonies where the sudden hushing of the tones sounded chillingly effective..... The Brandenburg Sinfonia played superbly”

Shelagh Godwin

##### **Civic Hall Concert : 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2000**

Surrey Advertiser, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2000

##### **‘A real feast of English music’**

William Walton's extravagant choral masterpiece, *Belshazzar's Feast* is a spacious piece of music and seemed an unlikely choice for our modest Guildford Civic. Yet Saturday's performance by the Guildford Philharmonic Choir and the Vasari Singers worked surprisingly well.



Jeremy with composer, David Fanshawe

With the Vasari singers giving moral and musical support to the Guildford Philharmonic Choir, the resulting sound was clear, confident and well-directed.

There was an intimacy to the performance that added rather than subtracted to the work's excitement, the audience being drawn in by the charismatic baritone narrator Robert Rice.

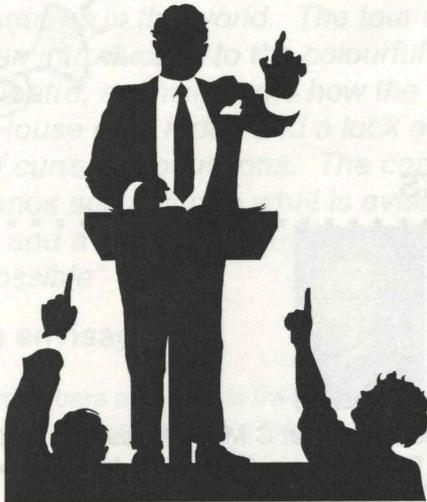
The well balanced programme was of works by 20<sup>th</sup> century English composers. Of these, David Fanshawe is still living and was in the hall to receive the warm applause for his composition *Fanfare to the Planet Earth* and *Millennium March*.

Linda Mowat



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

### Fixing the date!



We've just had our Mozart concert in the Cathedral and some members had friends who couldn't come because it was half term. This is sometimes a good excuse for potential guests who didn't want to come in any case, but we do occasionally have less than ideal days for our performances.

Why do we have the Cathedral or the Civic? These are the only two venues in Guildford that are big enough for our large choir and an orchestra; we also need to have a sufficient seating capacity to generate enough income to cover our costs. For the Mozart concert we needed to sell about 750 tickets to break even

Costs at the Civic are much higher than at the Cathedral, for about the same seating capacity. The Cathedral also seems to be better at attracting the type of audience to which our concerts appeal.

There are annual meetings about booking the Cathedral to which we send a representative. The meetings discuss the following year's dates, so in practise we are booking dates two years in advance. The present Dean only allows the Cathedral to be used for concerts once a month and there are many organisations that are interested: Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, Guildford Choral, the University, Woking Choral Society, Surrey Festival Choir etc. The result is that we usually have to take the only dates that are offered to us: half term, or too soon in our season, or too late!

Next time you wonder why a concert is at the Civic on Cup Final night perhaps this article will give some background to the difficulties of fixing a date!

**John Trigg**

### Schedule of Concerts 2000 - 2002

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 17 <sup>th</sup> December, 2000 - Guildford Civic:    | Mayor of Guildford's Christmas Carol Concert  | ? |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> March, 2001 - Guildford Civic:       | Ein Deutsches Requiem by Brahms.  | ? |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> May, 2001 - Guildford Cathedral:     | Mendelssohn: Overture "The Hebrides" (Fingal's Cave)<br>Rachmaninov: Second Piano Concerto (Soloist: Jeremy Filsell)<br>Vaughan Williams: A Sea Symphony. | ? |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2001 - Guildford Cathedral: | Handel: The Messiah   |   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> December, 2001 - Guildford Civic:    | The Mayor of Guildford's Christmas Concert  |   |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> April, 2002 - Guildford Cathedral:   | Projected to celebrate the 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.  |   |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> May 2002 - Guildford Cathedral:      | (Projected - Mahler: Symphony No. 8)  |   |

## PUBLICITY AND SELLING CONCERT TICKETS

It needn't be a chore. But it is important, not only for obvious financial reasons but also because our reputation is, I believe, enhanced when we sing to a full house.

I have found that the earlier one starts to interest people in a concert the better the chance of making ticket sales. Of course everybody has their own favourite way of approaching this task but here are a few ideas that I find work for me and might help somebody. No guarantees though!

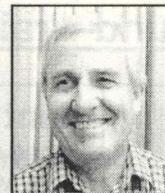
- o Do make use of the advance publicity material
- o Tell your friends and work colleagues in good time
- o Listen out for anyone who expresses the slightest interest in music
- o Offer to get the tickets for them
- o Invite them back for coffee after the concert
- o Tell them about the next one!

I have started to maintain a list of friends who I know are interested in music so that I can reasonably expect to sell to a proportion of them every time.

In the Guildford area there is always a wide choice of concert music available and I feel that most of the audiences are made up from people who have been asked to come along rather than people who have chosen a concert from advertisements alone.

I have received some useful ideas from choir members about promoting our concerts for which many thanks. Please let me know of any idea you may have that will help sell more tickets.

**Alan Batterbury**



## Composer in focus - Johannes Brahms (1833 -1897)

Brahms was born in Hamburg in May 1833, the son of an orchestral double-bass player. His skill as a pianist developed early and by the time he was 10 years old, he was being taught by the distinguished teacher Eduard Marxsen, but by the time he was 14 he was obliged to play in dance halls and taverns to augment the family income. At 20 he teamed up with Eduard Remenyi, a Hungarian violinist.

Together they wandered about Europe giving concerts. Remenyi introduced Brahms to Joseph Jochim, one of the leading violinists of the day, who recognised the young man's genius and introduced him to some influential people of the music world. One of these was Franz Liszt, but this came to nothing as the two men did not like each other from the start.



A caricature of Brahms. The hedgehog alludes to the 'Red Hedgehog' restaurant, where Brahms often ate, while also hinting at his prickly nature.

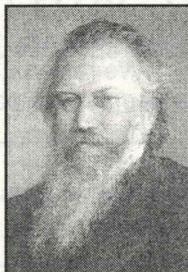
Soon afterwards, in 1853, he was befriended by the composer and critic, Robert Schumann and his wife Clara, who were thrilled by his musical genius and wanted to help develop his talents. Sadly, the next year Robert Schumann had a mental breakdown, from which he never recovered. Brahms was a great help to Clara throughout this painful time and they remained friends for life.

From 1857-60 Brahms held an appointment at the little court of Detmold, south-west of Hanover. This only occupied part of the year.

He conducted and trained a ladies choir in Hamburg. In 1862 he moved to Vienna. There he settled down to a more or less regular life, conducting, playing and composing. His music was becoming better known. He met Wagner and was not too proud to help copy out the orchestral scores of *Die Meistersinger* for a Viennese performance of the opera. He was able to make a comfortable living from his musical activities.

Brahms had many friends, but he also made many enemies, because of his quick temper and sharp tongue. Though he had a number of minor flirtations in his life, he never married.

In 1865 Brahms was heartbroken by the death of his mother and this inspired him to complete *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, first heard on Good Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1868.



A portrait of Brahms at the age of 58 years

Over the years Brahms and his music gained recognition and acclaim. His golden period was during his 40s and early 50s, when he wrote some of his most important orchestral works.

In 1897 he died from cancer.

## Fund—raising



### Plant Sale - 5th June, 2000

A good selection of plants and seedlings were brought in by members to sell for Choir funds. Hilary would like to thank people for their support. A total of £52.50 was raised.

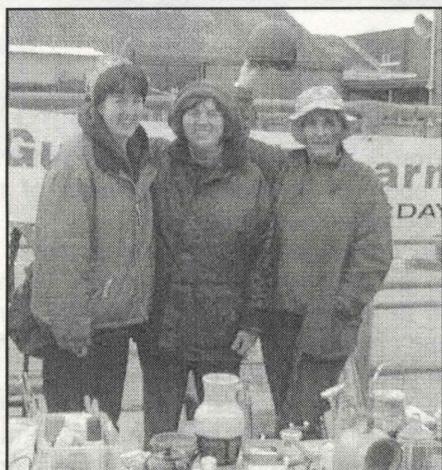


### The 100 Club Results

The winner of the £100 June Prize was Graham Barwick

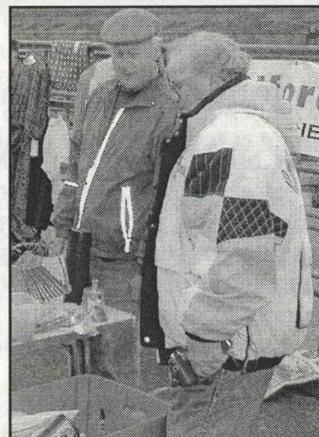
Month	£20	£15	£10
July	98 Rachel Edmundson	8 Kathy Stickland	83 John Parry
August	39 Robin Onslow	38 Max New	62 Marion Arbuckle
September	93 Michael Dawe	46 Gillian Rix	66 Christine Wilks
October	95 Michael Dawe	83 John Parry	90 Maggie van Koetsveld
November	60 Colin Jameson	83 John Parry	84 Robin Onslow

### Car—boot - 14th October, 2000



It was one of those days! You didn't know whether it was going to rain, but it looked as if it might. We managed to pitch our stall in the same successful spot as last time (near the toilets and café !!!)

The Guildford Philharmonic Choir's well known banner was prominently displayed. We had a steady stream of customers and **raised £310.**



Alec with a tough customer

This time we had reinforcements and our thanks go to Alec Leggatt, Mary Clayton, Mary Broughton and Lorna Gray.

Some items have been placed in shops where they will get a better price than at the 'car boot'. Currently we have items at the nearly new and antique shops.

**Jackie Alderton**

???????

### QUIZNIGHT 18TH NOVEMBER, 2000

???????

A jolly good challenging time was had by all (we hope) !!

We raised £325 for choir funds.

Many thanks to all the people who participated and helped in various ways. J.A.

**The sale of lawn-fertiliser** at recent rehearsals has raised over £35.00.

Many thanks to Carole Terry.



**DON'T FORGET -**

**Choir notelets are on sale every week at only £1.00 for 4 cards**

Laurie has cards available to buy at rehearsals.



## OFFICERS OF THE GPC

### **John Trigg - Hon. Chairman**



Most of you will already know that John is the Chairman of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir.

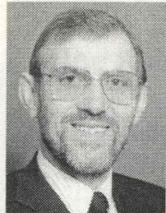
He usually has something to say during the break in rehearsal. He has been singing with the choir for 10 years.

Other choirs he has also sung in are the Royal Choral Society and the University of Surrey Choir. He is married to Hilary, our Social Secretary and they have three daughters. His hobbies and interests include Railways, Steam Engines and Industrial History.

When asked his occupational status, his reply was 'Unfortunately I am the only tenor who works'. (Now, I don't know if this is true, but I have to report it as it was said, but would not like to be the cause of any unrest or ill-feeling amongst the tenor section.)

Just for the record, John is the Deputy Head of a secondary school.

### **Bob Cowell - Hon. Treasurer**



The treasurer has a lot of responsibility in a large choir. Bob is our treasurer and he does it with determined efficiency.

He has been a member of the GPC for the past 12 years. Before that he has been with the Manama Singers (Bahrain), Duhar Singers (Qatar), Muscat Singers (Oman), Aden Light Opera Society, Guildford Singers, Sidcup Choral Society, Penzance Choral Society and Penzance Light Opera Society.

Bob is married with two grown-up daughters. Now retired he is interested in his computer, golf, badminton and genealogy.

He feels that the GPC has a very bright future and that the distancing of it from the Guildford Borough Council has had a very positive effect on the Choir's development.

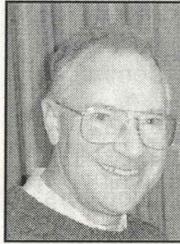
### **Laurie James - N.F.M.S. Representative**



For the past two years Laurie has been on the GPC Committee as the contact with the NFMS (National Federation of Music Society). Look out for Laurie in rehearsal breaks - he is often helping to sell Choir Notelets

Laurie has been singing with the choir for 11 years. Before that he sang with The Shepperton Singers, The Epworth Choir, Woking, and the Gemini Chorale, West Byfleet.

### **Stephen Jepson - Hon. Secretary & Concerts Manager**



Our diligent secretary has been singing with the GPC since 1991.

A Company Director, now pretty well retired, Stephen is an Industrial Process Control Consultant.

He is married to Jill and they have three grown-up, married children and one grandson.

'Prehistorically' Stephen sang with the Marlborough College Choir & Choral Society. Now Stephen sings with the Holmbury St Mary Church Choir, Holmbury Choral Society, Surrey Festival Choir, plus other groups ad hoc (especially Madrigals).

Stephen lists a number of interests in order of time consumption:

- \* Being GPC secretary
- \* Chairing and running the Association of Surrey Choirs (ie Staging)
- \* Home & garden DIY
- \* International parenting/grand-parenting
- \* Theatre, singing and listening to music.
- \* Church and village affairs

Stephen devotes a tremendous amount of time and energy to our Choir and says, 'If it wasn't so much fun, there's no way I would work so hard for nothing'.

Other comments: The present work burden is too much for the number of people on the GPC committee. Individuals have virtually no back-up. As soon as someone goes on holiday, or away on business, as secretary I immediately become the direct contact for their brief, so I know how hard everyone else works.

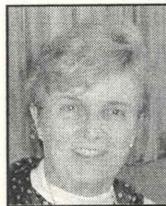
I would like to see more choir members coming forward to act as specific deputies, plus a slight increase in committee size. The present committee is the same size as it was when the GP Office did all the concert planning, promotion and preparation work.

Laurie currently finds time to sing with two other groups: The Ember Church Society and 'The Accidentals', Helliford.

Laurie is a volunteer and Trustee of Painshill Landscape Garden, Cobham.

Other comments: Laurie feels that the choir has much improved over the past few years, with an encouraging influx of younger members with excellent voices.

## Marion Arbuckle - Patrons and Friends



Marion rejoined the GPC in 1995, having previously sang with the choir in Tod Handley's time. She sang with University and college choirs in Edinburgh and Cambridge, and then the Lea Singers in Hertfordshire. In 1999 she came onto the GPC Committee and now she has responsibility for looking after, and recruiting, Patrons and Friends of the Choir.

Marion is married with three grown-up children. Her two sons were both Guildford Cathedral Choristers. Now retired from teaching (Cambridge, Herts, and Guildford), Marion still does some work for her husband. She says there is never a dull moment in his busy veterinary practice.

Marion has many interests which include : travelling, making music, serving on local PCC and charities. She is also a Cathedral Guide.

Feelings about the GPC: Marion feels that we're very lucky to have 'Jeremy and Jeremy', musicians of such calibre and good humour. Rehearsals are enjoyable, the choir is friendly and enthusiastic and we have this great opportunity to make fine music together.

## Elizabeth-Claire Bazin - Programmes



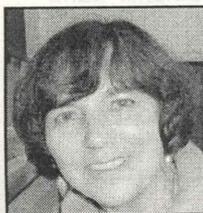
Every time we have a concert a very comprehensive, professional programme is produced by Elizabeth-Claire. This is the result of considerable effort, dedication and research on her part.

Elizabeth-Claire has been a member of the GPC for three years, but says it feels longer than that. She has sung with various church choirs, Pembroke College, Cambridge, Chapel Choir, Cambridge University Chorus and the Bach Choir before joining us.

Working as a solicitor in London, Elizabeth-Claire lives in Guildford with her husband, Jerome and dog, William, a goldfish and a hamster. She likes working with animals and children, and would like to travel the world.

She says she feels that being on the GPC Committee and having the responsibility for the programmes is a lot of hard work, but worth it in the end.

## Margaret Dentskevich - Newsletter Editor



Margaret has been with the GPC for over 4 years. Years ago she sang with the Knaphill and St Johns Operatic Society, Epworth Choir and The Gemini Chorale at West Byfleet.

For the past two years she has been editing the GPC newsletter and though it involves quite a bit of hard work, it is very interesting meeting old and new members and getting to know what goes on ( and great practice for one's computer skills!!)

A retired teacher, she has three grown-up children. She enjoys playing a little golf, tennis, walking, travelling and has recently started to try her hand at silver-smithing

## Noreen Ayton - Membership



Noreen does two important jobs on the GPC Committee:

- Membership Secretary
- Organiser and manager of the 100 Club

She joined the choir in 1994.

Previously she sang with the Royal Choral Society, the Engelmann Singers, Hastings Choir plus numerous other small choral groups.

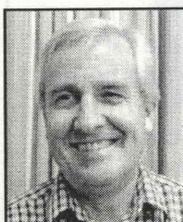
Noreen and her husband Brian are both retired teachers. Noreen was the Music specialist at St Maur's, Weybridge (independent R.C. girls' school) for 21 years. She is interested in photography, genealogy and charity work (she is P.A to the Executive Chairman and founder of Voices for Hospices).

When asked for her feelings about the GPC Noreen says ' I love it! After five years as Membership Secretary, I think I now know everyone by name. It's a pleasure to come to rehearsals and to see how our standards are continuing to rise, year by year.'

Other comments: My one wish is to see more commitment to regular attendance and involvement, from every member of the choir, throughout the year.

There still seems to be an element of selecting which concerts to take in by some members.

## Alan Batterbury - Publicity & ticket sales



Alan has lived in the Guildford area for twenty five years and during that time he has sang with the Epworth Choir and Guildford Choral Society. He joined the GPC in April 1999.

Alan is married to Elizabeth. They have two grown-up children and one granddaughter. Since retiring from the computer industry Alan still finds time to do occasional

spells of consultancy work. He is a member of the Rotary Club of Ripley and Send, enjoys a bit of painting and drawing, and walking holidays in Europe with friends

He hopes that we can raise the level of ticket sales, so that we can always sing to a full house.

'If Guildford Choral can do it, so can we' !

(See article on page 3 )

## Jackie Alderton - Fund-raising



Jackie has been singing with the GPC for longer than she can remember (about 11 years) In the past she was a member of Croydon Bach Choir, Nonesuch Opera Co., Woking Choral Society and Southampton University Choir. She is married to Chris, who acts as front-of-house manager at concerts in the Cathedral. They have 2 children: Robert (studying at university) and Charlotte (a budding thespian/singer). Jackie is a teacher of History at Woking High School (ATOGTP). Special interests, apart from singing, include all aspects of the theatre, opera, heritage, Quiz Nights (!! ) and walking the dog.

She is also the Front-of-House manager for Walton and Weybridge Operatic Society.

Feelings for the GPC: 'I love it ! I love the discipline of the rehearsals, the "buzz" of performance, and being a small part of an exciting and successful choir.'

Other comments: I appreciate all the help from other members re. Car-boots, quizzes, drinks etc., and would welcome even more people becoming involved, or giving suggestions for new events. Volunteers are always welcomed.

## Christine Medlow - Librarian



Christine is our Music Librarian - always ready and well organised to distribute hired music to choir members. Christine has been a member of the GPC for 23 years. In earlier years she was a member of the London Orpheus Choir and the College Chapel Choir at university.

Her husband, Ron is a very loyal supporter of the GPC and her two daughters both enjoy singing. Education features very much in Christine's life, as she is the Principal Examiner for GCSE Mathematics and, also, involved in writing Mathematics text books for secondary school students.

The GPC has been an important and enjoyable part of her life over the years. She says she has found it interesting to see how the choir has developed. The friendly atmosphere enables Choir members to relax after the day's work at the same time as working hard preparing the music for performance.

Other comments: Thanks to all choir members who help to make my job easier. This must be the best choir for carefully removing markings from hired copies, and for returning the copies so promptly.

## Hilary Trigg - Social secretary



Hilary is married to our Chairman, John Trigg. They have three grown-up daughters and two dogs. She enjoys walking, gardening and skiing. In 1968 she sang with the University of Surrey Choir in Guildford Cathedral, after the famous floods and before the modern university was built. She has been a member of the GPC since giving up work to have her first baby, who is now 26 years old. She is a secondary teacher.

Feelings about the GPC: 'It is a very important part of my life. I feel very privileged to sing and enjoy music with such a gifted collection of people: the Choir, the two Jeremys, the orchestras and soloists. I am very proud of the concerts we put on. I often arrive exhausted and stressed at 7-30 pm on Monday evening and go home a new person after the rehearsal.'

## Wedding news from Tony



I met Joan at a session of the Farnham U3A Opera Group. We had both been widowed for 5 years and had children and grandchildren. We chose to marry on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, which turned out to be a lovely day, warm and sunny. The service had a splendidly light touch to include many children. The reception for nearly 90 guests was held at my home with one marquee on the terrace at the back of the house, and another under some trees for the children. Joan and I cut the cake using my Naval sword, and my son Stephen had the last word as our Best Man.

We believe that with the help of our families, friends and neighbours, not to mention the 'Clerk of the Weather', it was the happiest wedding of the year.

**Tony Macklow-Smith**



Tony and Joan Macklow-Smith outside the church, after the ceremony

**Congratulations & Best Wishes**

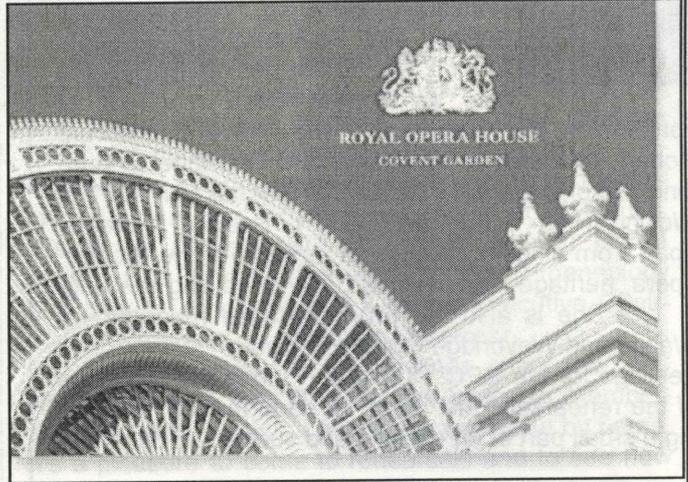




## General items

### Are you interested in a choir trip to Covent Garden?

*"Backstage tours of the Royal Opera House offer a unique glimpse behind the scenes of one of the busiest international opera and ballet theatres in the world. The tour includes an introduction to the colourful history of the theatre, an insight into how the Royal Opera House runs today and a look at aspects of current productions. The content of tours varies according to what is available on the day and a visit to the auditorium is not always possible"*

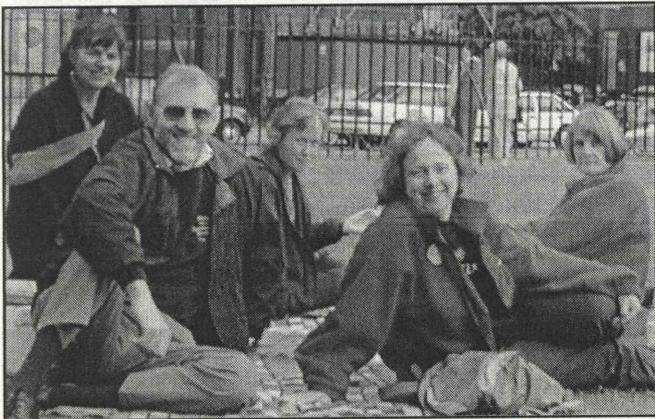


### What is envisaged:

50 choir members and guests travel by coach on a Saturday in June or July to reach Covent Garden. We might try to get tickets for the Opera (party rates) in the evening.

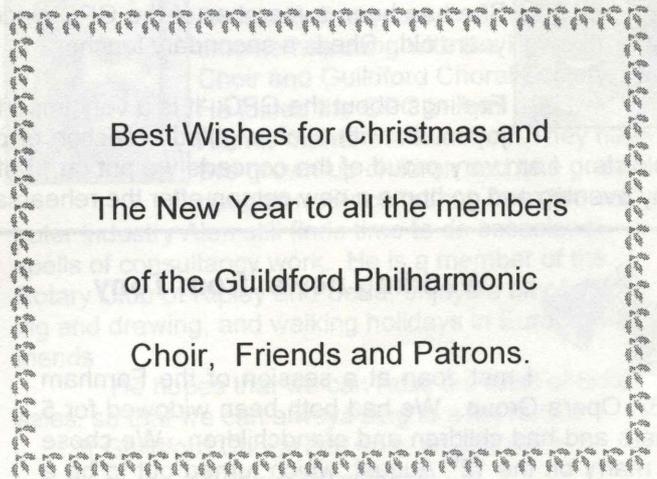
Costs: Tour £7.00, coach probably £8 + any opera tickets .

If you are seriously interested please get a form from Hilary Trigg. As we cannot say what the date we will be and the opera programme for next summer is not available yet, we will need to have well in excess of 50 people interested before going ahead with enquiries. We need to know by 4th December.



### Dreaming of Gerontius:

Bob Cowell and friends enjoying a picnic outside the Royal Albert Hall on 25th June ,2000



Best Wishes for Christmas and  
The New Year to all the members  
of the Guildford Philharmonic  
Choir, Friends and Patrons.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this fifth edition of the GPC Newsletter. If you would like to make a comment or a suggestion for an item, please don't hesitate to contact me, either during rehearsal or on 01483 768 789

**Margaret Dentskevich ( Editor)**

You will find more information on the Choir's Internet Web site :

<http://www.GuildfordPhilharmonicChoir.org.uk>

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