

A Christmas Carol

St Thomas' Church, Goring

12th December 2010



Goring Chamber Choir

Conducted by
Frances Brewitt-Taylor

in company with

Goring Gap Players

Directed by
Ivor Coleman



PROGRAMME

1. Christmas Eve in the City

Choir	Noe! Noe!	French, arr Mack Wilberg
	Poverty	Welsh
	Night of Silence	Daniel Kantor
All	God rest ye merry gentlemen	

2. Marley's Ghost

Choir	The Lord at first did Adam make	trad arr David Willcocks
	In the bleak midwinter	Harold Darke

3. Christmas Past

Choir	Remember, O thou man	Bob Chilcott
All	Good King Wenceslas	

————— **Interval (20 minutes)** —————

4. Christmas Present

Choir	This is the truth	Ralph Vaughan-Williams
	Christmas is coming	trad arr Walford Davies
All	O little town of Bethlehem	

5. Christmas Yet to Come

Choir	The Christ-child	Gabriel Jackson
All	Unto us is born a son	arr Archer

6. Christmas Day and St Stephen's Day

Choir	Nativity Carol	John Rutter
	Welcome Yule!	Charles Parry
	Deck the Hall	trad arr David Willcocks

CONGREGATIONAL CAROLS

God rest you merry, gentlemen

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour was born upon this day,
To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray:
*O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.*
2. From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came,
And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name:
O tidings...
3. The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding in tempest, storm and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straightway this blessed babe to find:
O tidings...
4. But when to Bethlehem they came, whereat this infant lay,
They found him in a manger where oxen feed on hay,
His mother Mary kneeling, unto the Lord did pray:
O tidings...
5. Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace,
This holy tide of Christmas all others does deface:
O tidings...

Good King Wenceslas

Everyone

1. Good King Wenceslas looked out, on the Feast of Stephen,
When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even:
Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.

All gentlemen

2. Hither, page, and stand by me, if thou know'st it, telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?

All ladies and children

Sire he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence, by St Agnes' fountain.

All gentlemen

3. Bring me flesh and bring me wine, bring me pine logs hither:
Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither.

Everyone

Page and monarch, forth they went, forth they went together,
Through the rude wind's wild lament and the bitter weather.

All ladies and children

4. Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know not how; I can go no longer.

All gentlemen

Mark my footsteps, good my page; tread thou in them boldly:
Thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly.

Everyone

5. In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure; wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing.

O little town of Bethlehem

1. O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above the deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in the dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.
2. O morning stars together, proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love.
3. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.
4. O holy child of Bethlehem descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Unto us is born a son

Everyone

1. Unto us is born a son, King of quires supernal,
See on earth his life begun, of lords the Lord eternal,
Of lords the Lord eternal.

All ladies and children

2. Christ from heaven descending low, comes on earth a stranger,
Ox and ass their owner know, be cradled in the manger,
Be cradled in the manger.

All gentlemen

3. This did Herod sore affray, and grievously bewilder,
So he gave the word to slay, and slew the little childer,
And slew the little childer.

Everyone

4. Of his love and mercy mild this the Christmas story,
And O that Mary's gentle child might lead us up to glory,
Might lead us up to glory.

Everyone

5. O and A and A and O, cum cantibus in choro
Let the merry organ go, benedicamus Domino,
Benedicamus Domino.

PROGRAMME NOTES

A Play for Today

Almost 170 years ago Charles Dickens created an image of the Victorian Christmas which not only attracted a huge readership at the time, but survives to this day on greetings cards, chocolate boxes and jigsaw puzzles. Whether we have read *A Christmas Carol* or not, this is the sentimental tale we all know - or think we know.

With a small sickly child, enormous turkey and parlour games around the fireplace there is certainly sentiment in *A Christmas Carol*, and it is ultimately what we now call a "feel-good" story. But there is much more to it than that. Although Dickens was a very commercial writer (and the *Carol* was his most profitable publication), he combined this skill with a deep social conscience, and never more effectively than in this short piece.

Like many good Christmas tales it is a ghost story. Whilst the ghosts may not seem very frightening ones by our modern standards, what is disturbing is what they show us of the fine lines between employment, poverty and destitution, and their vivid depiction of the consequences of greed and the pursuit of wealth. Themes as disturbingly topical now as they were when Dickens was writing in 1843.

They, and not the sentiment, are what make the story truly memorable.

Our staging of the play aims to reflect these timeless themes by giving the drama a contemporary relevance. Whilst remaining faithful to the original text, we have removed the characters from their traditional Victorian surroundings and taken advantage of the large, flexible space provided by the recently refurbished church. This has enabled us to create a sense of London's city streets and a setting for one or two surprises.

Music

We have chosen seasonal carols to emphasise the themes of the drama. The first group highlights the social status of those to whom the Christmas message came: lowly shepherds (*Noe! Noe!*), the poor, the humble and lame (*Poverty*), the desolate in the winter of life (*Night of silence*). These are the people for whom the charity collectors were seeking donations.

The second group of carols focuses on the response required of mankind: to be joyful and open-hearted.

The third group picks up the message of Marley's ghost again: *Remember, O thou man* is a stern warning of the need to repent while there is yet time, and for the rich to help the poor:

*Therefore Christian men be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.*

After the interval comes the Ghost of Christmas Present; the carols are old traditional texts focusing on the central message of love.

After the horrific vision of a possible future, Scrooge has had a change of heart. The vision of Chesterton's poem *The Christ-child* is emotionally conveyed in the music of Jackson's new setting.

Then it is Christmas Day and St Stephen's Day: we wallow a little in Rutter's *Nativity carol*, but Parry's vigorous *Welcome Yule!* takes us through the post-Christmas saints to the New Year, a new beginning.

And as we aim to keep Christmas well in keeping with Dickens' final scene we put up decorations, dance, eat and drink with jollity as described in *Deck the hall*.

DRAMA

Goring Gap Players, with members of Streats Ahead youth drama group, are performing scenes from *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, adapted by Rob Clarke.

Cast (in order of appearance)

Narrator	Rob Clarke
Ebenezer Scrooge	Teri Stevens
Bob Cratchit	Ivor Coleman
Fred, Scrooge's Nephew	Al Miles
Charity Collector	Anne Caines
Charity Collector	Arthur Caines
Tiny Tim	Archie Smart
Miss Thompkins	Becky Shears
Jacob Marley's Ghost	John Smelt
Ghost of Christmas Past	Anne Caines
Belle	Laura Miles
Young Scrooge	Al Miles
Ghost of Christmas Present	Bev Wilden
Bailiff	John Smelt
Mrs Cratchit	Carolyn Armstrong
Martha Cratchit	Lottie Franklin
Peter Cratchit	Harper Ford
Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come	Al Miles
Street Boy	Mason Ford
Maid	Becky Shears
Director	Ivor Coleman
Technical Manager	John Calladine
Lighting	Ian Shears
Sound	Chris Hawes
Props and Costumes	Linda Palmer

Cratchit family's flowers are donated by *Ferry Lane Florist*

CHOIR

Musical Director: Frances Brewitt-Taylor

Accompanist: Janet Pound

Sopranos:

Claire Allison, Sandy Boshier, Geraldine Crippen, Ginty Fay, Amanda Hines, Lesley Lambert, Valerie Loveday, Christine Richardson, Audrey Rogers, Suzanne Smith, Susan Terry, Frances Thompson

Contraltos:

Jenny Boyd, Myrtle Campbell, Valerie Cooper, Myra Cottingham, Tanya Hawley, Susan Lee, Ann Marshall, Marilyn Purdie, Liz Rapple, Mary Rollinson, Jane Ryder, Elma Wishart, Cassie Watcyn-Rogers, Jenny Worthington

Tenors:

Andy Button, John Cottingham, Stuart Crippen, Bob Fay, Charles Lambert, Graham Pearce

Basses:

Paul Bradstock, John Burton, Elwyn Hughes, Stan Lawrence, Henry Parkinson, Peter Purdie, Nigel Suffield-Jones, Tom Worthington

CHOIR NOTES

Charity

The collection is in favour of the Crisis charity (www.crisis.org.uk).

Sponsorship

We thank Warmingshams Estate Agents for their continued sponsorship of our annual Christmas concert.

Forthcoming Events

Details of our future concerts may be found on our website:

www.goringchamberchoir.org.uk

Accompanist

Our accompanist, Janet Pound, is leaving us this summer. We'll be sad to see her go. But it means that we are now on the lookout for a new accompanist. If you are interested, or know of someone that might be, do give our Chairman Susan Terry a call on 01491 671 704

Back Page

Full page Warmingham advert
to go here