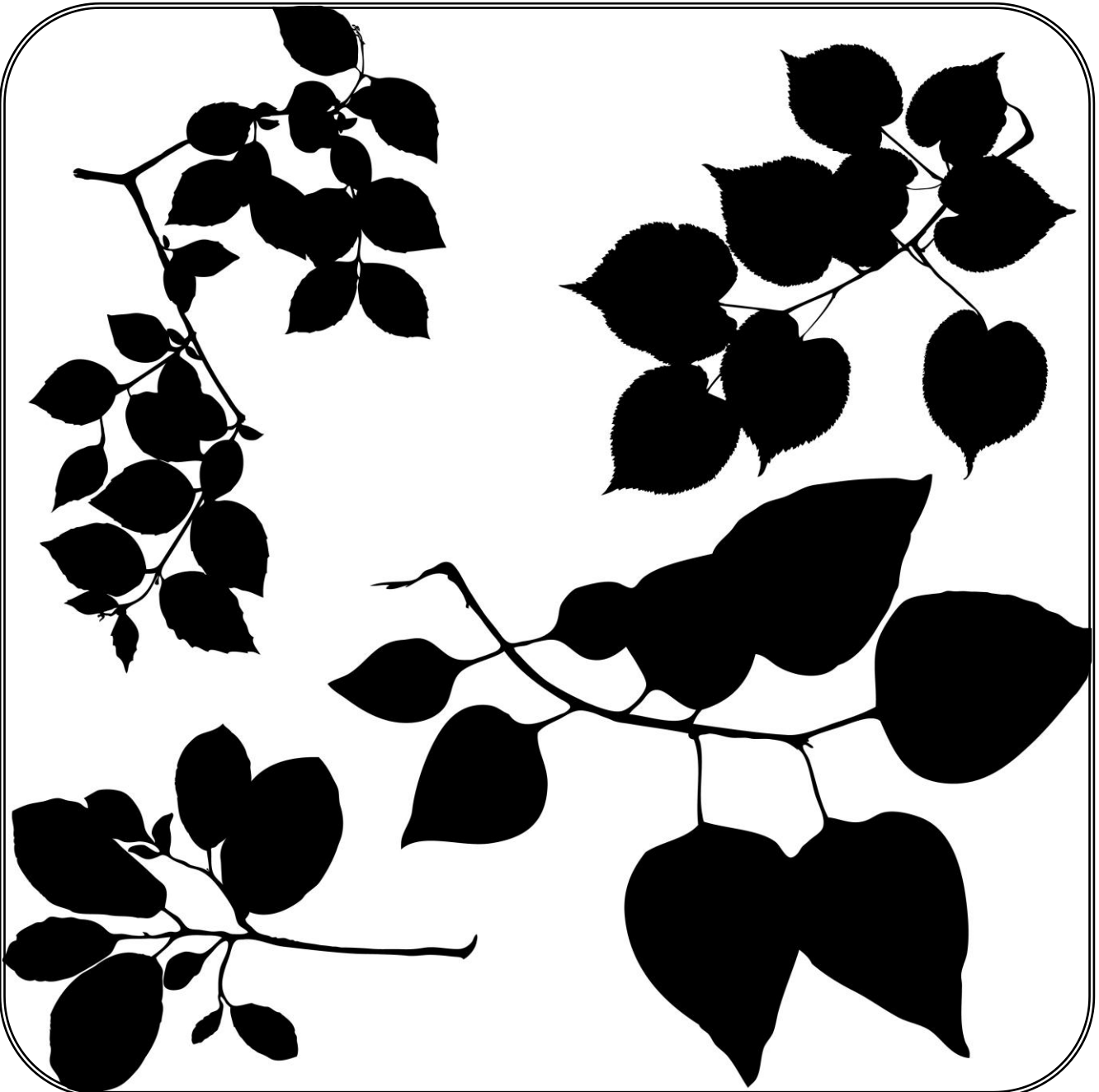




A Green Christmas 2011



Saturday 10th December 2011 at 3pm
St Thomas' Church
Goring

A Green Christmas

a concert for choir and audience

GORING CHAMBER CHOIR

Simon Brett organ
Frances Brewitt-Taylor conductor

PROGRAMME

All: O come, O come, Emmanuel 15th C French melody arr A Carter

Christmas

John Betjeman

Choir:

1. O Christmas tree German trad arr Keyte & Parrott
2. Blest Mary wanders through the thorn German trad arr Keyte & Parrott
3. There stood in heaven a linden tree Old German melody arr. R Jacques

All: Deck the Hall

Welsh trad

Mistletoe

little tree

Walter de la Mare

e e cummings

Organ solo

Choir:

4. People, look east French melody arr B Ferguson
5. Adam lay ybounden Boris Ord
6. Cold December's winds were stilled Catalan trad arr Keyte & Parrott

Brief Interval

All: Lo, how a rose e'er blooming 14th C German melody, harm M Praetorius

December

Dollie Radford

Choir:

7. There is no rose Stephen Caracciolo
8. The cherry tree carol English trad arr D Willcocks
9. There is a flower John Rutter

All: In the bleak midwinter

Gustav Holst

Trees be company

The winter tree

William Barnes

Douglas Florian

Choir:

10. The holly and the ivy John Gardner
11. Jesus Christ the apple tree Elizabeth Poston
12. Sans Day carol Cornish trad arr J Rutter

Please join us for a glass of wine and a mince pie after the concert.

CONGREGATIONAL CAROLS

I saw three ships

Everyone

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear:
*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

All men

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave:
*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

All women and children

3. come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight:
*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Everyone

4. O come, thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery:
*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Everyone

5. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes on Sinai's height,
In ancient times did give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe:
*Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Deck the hall

1. Deck the hall with boughs of holly: Fal, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
'Tis the season to be jolly! Fal, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
Fill the mead cup, drain the barrel, Fal, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
Troll the ancient Christmas carol. Fal, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.
2. See the flowing bowl before us!
Strike the harp and join the chorus!
Follow me in merry measure,
While I sing of beauty's treasure.
3. Fast away the old year passes,
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses!
Laughing, quaffing, all together,
Heedless of the wind and weather.

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming

1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As men of old have sung.
It came a floweret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.
2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to men a Saviour,
When half-spent was the night.

In the bleak midwinter

1. In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone.
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter
Long ago.
2. Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign.
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
Jesus Christ.
3. Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only his mother,
In her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.
4. What can I give him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a Wise Man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him,
Give my heart.

PROGRAMME NOTES

Looking through Christmas carols and poems this year I was struck by the prevalence of green imagery: Christmas trees, apple trees, lime trees, cherry trees, holly, ivy, mistletoe, the flowering rose, the lily, the thorn-wood. These all look back to the book of Genesis from which derive the OT prophecies: *'And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.'* (ch 2, v 9) *'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee'*. (ch 3, v18). Or in Isaiah's words (in King James' version): *'There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.'* (ch 11, v1). Jesus before his crucifixion likens himself to a green tree (Luke 23, v31).

The symbol of the evergreen was too strongly rooted in the old religions to be eradicated with the coming of Christianity. These ancient symbols of the continuing life force at the winter solstice were assimilated as Christian symbols of the renewal of life at Christ's birth.

The Christmas tree seems to have been a late mediaeval German custom representing the Tree of Life of the mystery plays.

The barren thorn-wood is an image of the fallen world, in which the birth of Christ is symbolized by the return of the thorn trees to their flowering condition. Cold weather also looms large in Christmas carols; graphically describing winter before the solstice, when everything lies dormant, apparently dead.

The flowering rose is a favourite mediaeval image representing Mary:

*There is a flower sprung of a tree,
The root thereof is called Jesse
The blessed branch this flower on grew
Was Mary mild that bare Jesu.* (John Audelay, 15th century)

As the 15th century text of *Adam lay ybounden* depicts the fall of mankind because of an apple, so Joshua Smith in New Hampshire in 1784 describes Jesus as an apple tree:

*The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green;
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.*

The evergreen holly and ivy have very old associations with Celtic mythology, representing the male and the female, the Holly King and the Goddess. Holly was a sacred tree for the Druids and a powerful symbol for the early Romans who gave boughs as gifts during the festival of Saturnalia at the Winter Solstice. An old Christian legend also says that the holly tree sprang up under Christ's feet, as a symbol of the crown of thorns. The attributes of the holly are used in Christmas carols as symbols of the Redemption and Passion: its white blossom (Mary), its red berry (Christ's blood), its prickly (the crown of thorns) and its bark (the vinegar mixed with gall given to Jesus to drink on the cross). Mistletoe was

the most sacred of all plants to the Druids, a sign of peace and goodwill, love and fertility and associated with growth, healing and new beginnings.

In the Cherry Tree Carol Mary finds cherries and berries in an orchard. The trees are obedient to her will and bend down so that she can pick the blood-red fruit - evidently a pointer towards the pain that she will experience. But the holly berries in the Sans Day Carol are green and black as well as red. Why? Answers after the concert, please!

Frances Brewitt-Taylor

CHOIR

Musical Director: Frances Brewitt-Taylor

Accompanist: Simon Brett

Sopranos:

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

Contraltos:

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

Tenors:

Andy Button, John Cottingham, Stuart Crippen, 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 retiring collection is in favour of the Sue Ryder charity (www.sueryder.org). The net proceeds from the sale of wine and mince pies after the concert will also be donated to the Sue Ryder charity.

Sponsorship

We thank Warmingham 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

New Members

Goring Chamber Choir welcomes new singers applying to join the choir. Reasonable sight reading skills are required. If you are interested, please contact any choir member or email us at post@goringchamberchoir.org.uk. You will be invited to attend a couple of rehearsals initially.