April
2011

Immanuel's GROUND

Warwick's West Gallery Quire

NEWSLETTER

Mid-Shires' Quires' Day

Our seventh annual full day of west gallery music will be held on **Saturday 30th April 2011** at in its usual venue in **Byfield Village Hall**, which for those who havn't attended before is roughly mid-way between Banbury and Daventry on the A361. Costing a mere £8 per person, the hall is usually filled with nearly 80 people from places far and wide who come to join us in singing and playing music from local midlands and mid-shires church composers, and from manuscripts which are known to have come from local churches. The music can be exhilarating, and the 20-odd basses singing on the hall stage one year became referred to as a 'mezzanine of masculinity' in subsequent reports.

We like to encourage local choirs to participate, in the past frequently coming from Banbury and Byfield itself, as well as Bedford and further afield. This is a chance to explore such music; whether you be a sight-reader or not, you will enjoy the friendliness and conviviality of the day. Lunchtime is an informal meal, with participants bringing a plate of something to share with others.

Fynn Titford-Mock

This year one of the Leaders will be **Fynn Titford-Mock** of **Stream of Sound** and **SpinnDrift**. He is currently studying for his Masters degree at Newcastle University, his subject being the music of west gallery composer Joseph Nicholds of Hurst Hill, nr Dudley (c.1784-1860). An Invitation and Booking Form is appended; it is necessary to book beforehand because we need to know numbers for the production of music.

Summertime Church Services

One of the joys of singing west gallery music is that we get to sing in churches with galleries, box pews and interesting pulpits, of which *St James the Great* at *Idlicote* in Warwickshire is no exception. Tucked away at the head of the village, the church is listed Grade 1 and is described, in part, in such listing (shown right).

Idlicote Church C13-C14. C17 chapel divided from chancel by 2-bay arcade of Tuscan column and 2 arches. Jacobean screen, C18 altar rails. Large box pew for manorial family. Most pews C17. 3-decker C17 pulpit with tester. C17 west gallery with solid wood treads to staircase.

We have been invited to sing **Evensong** on **Sunday 22nd May** at **6pm** at **Idlicote**, and this will follow the usual form of the Evening Service, using the metrical form of Psalms and Canticles. The hymn tunes have been chosen from the few remaining which have 'made it' into modern

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You have received this occasional Newsletter from **Immanuel's Ground** in order to keep you abreast of the Quire's activities, and because you have given us your email address for contact purposes. If, however, you now no longer wish to be kept informed in this way, please email the Quire's Webmaster at **edwin@immanuelsground.com** and your address will be removed from our list.

church hymnals although the words will also be metrical psalms, as was directed by Canon Law—hymns in church being prohibited before 1821. We shall probably be singing in the Chapel, as the gallery is rather too small for all those who would like to sing there!

Flower Festival at St Bartholomew's Church, Tardebigge, Worcestershire.

Tardebigge Church—from a painting by local artist and illustrator Rob Adams

On **Sunday 26th June** we visit **Tardebigge**, near Bromsgrove, and as part of the flower festival in *St Bartholomew's Church* we shall be giving a short recital during the afternoon, which in part will be an Open Rehearsal using the music for the Evensong we shall be singing at **6.00 pm** that evening. We look forward to renewing friends and acquaintances there.

There has been a church on this most picturesque site since 1138, the current church of St Bartholomew's being built in 1776 in sandstone following the final collapse of the tower of the old church on September 3rd 1775.

Our delayed Christmas Concert in Warwick

Eventually, on Sunday 6th February in Northgate Methodist Church we held our much delayed Christmas Concert, and as a result had an audience of over 100, raising more than £400 for the church's *Way Forward* fund. The following review was written in the parish magazine by a member of the church congregation.

Suddenly Like Spirits!

The scene was set as we took our seats for the Christmas Concert. The West Gallery Quire, attired in Georgian costume, invited us to eavesdrop on Christmas Eve with the Melstock choir as they went carol singing around the village. The first part of the concert was based on the world of Thomas Hardy as he looked back to the "old times". The narrative in between the wonderful carol singing informed us that straw was wound around ankles to keep the snowflakes from getting inside the boots and the choir was instructed to go in quietly without making any noise with their feet so as to "strike 'em suddenly like spirits". The church balcony was used to illustrate the dramas which include a man in a nightcap *[Farmer Shiner—Ed.]* who appeared at another window complaining loudly about the noise disturbing his sleep His complaints were drowned by the choir's enthusiastic rendering of "While shepherds watched . . ."

The man, a Church Warden in 'worldly frame' said "Thank you" ungratefully and slammed the window. This was followed by a cry of "the choir cannot be insulted" and "fortissimi!" and the singing of 'Shepherds Rejoice' concluded the first part.

During the Interval the audience had the opportunity to admire the colourful and informative display of activities and events in which the choir is involved.

The second half began with a hilarious Mummers play featuring King George, who was injured in a sword fight. Treatment with various implements including long-handled garden clippers (for trimming toenails), a large screwdriver, a drill and a can of spray lubricant was administered by a Doctor who had travelled through time and space and demanded a fee of 10 guineas. Musical items were then performed by the Ladies choir. Next there was music originating from New England, USA. Finally we rejoined the Melstock choir, who having finished their carol singing in the early hours of Christmas morning were in church for the Christmas Morning Service.

The Christmas anthem was always the centrepiece of the service. The audience applauded the choir so enthusiastically they performed an encore, and the concert finished with a spirited rendering of "While shepherds watched . . ." to the tune Lyngham, with many of the audience joining in enthusiastically. - *Sylvia Ratcliffe.*

Mid-Shires' Quires' Day

The Seventh

Saturday
30th April 2011

at 10.00 am

The Mellstock Quire, sketch from Thomas Hardy's notebooks; by courtesy of Dorset County Museum.

Immanuel's GROUND

hosts a day of

West Gallery Music

exploring psalms, hymns and anthems from the mid-shires

A new leader for 2011 will be
Fynn Titford-Mock
with music from Staffordshire's John Nicholds

The day will also include at least one setting of Psalm 128
to celebrate the Royal Wedding
on Friday 29th April

West Gallery Music Association

Byfield Village Hall
Northants

NN11 6UT

MID-SHIRES' QUIRES' DAY 2011

SATURDAY 30 APRIL

Immanuel's Ground, Warwick's West Gallery Quire, extend a warm invitation to join them in a day of regional West Gallery music. The cost will be £8 per person. A book of music, and light refreshments will be provided, but please bring a savoury or sweet dish, (cold food only and ready to serve) to the shared lunch.

The day's singing and playing will be held at Byfield Village Hall, Northants., NN11 6UT, between 10.00 a.m. and 4.30 p.m., doors open at 9.30 a.m. Byfield is on the A361, midway between the M40 (Junction 11) and the M1 (Junction 16). Numbers are limited to 80 people, so please book early to ensure a place, and to enable the production of music books, return your booking form no later than 16 April 2011.

Name: ..... Tel: .....

Address: ..... E-mail: .....

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No. of places required @£8 per person..... Total £.....

Please give names of all those for whom this booking is made:

.... Voice (SAT or B?) or instrument (please indicate) .....

.... Voice (SAT or B?) or instrument (please indicate) .....

.... Voice (SAT or B?) or instrument (please indicate) .....

.... Voice (SAT or B?) or instrument (please indicate) .....

(B♭ clarinet part book required: YES / NO)

Please complete and return this form, together with a cheque made payable to Immanuel's Ground, to:

Sheila Macadam, 30 Eynsham Road, Botley, Oxford, OX2 9BP
Tel: 01865 865773 (shelwin8@tiscali.co.uk)

(If you require a receipt, please enclose an s.a.e.)