

## **LARNE CHORAL SOCIETY AGM May 28<sup>th</sup> 2024 :**

### **Hon.Secretary's Report.**

The season of 2023/24 has been another exciting and busy year for Larne Choral Society (LCS), under the continued encouraging direction of our Conductor ,Andrea (Blain).

Andrea called for practises to commence earlier than usual ,on August 1<sup>st</sup>.2023, in what has become our present “home “ ,at the Sandy Bay Pavilion,Larne. This was to complete in earnest preparation for the Memorial Concert for Elaine (Hawthorne ),and commence practising for our Christmas concert ,simultaneously.

The Memorial Concert ,carefully planned by Ivan Hawthorne and thwarted in the previous year, finally came to fruition on Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> .,- auspiciously on what would have been Elaine's 60<sup>th</sup>.birthday -, in First Larne Presbyterian Church. It was a wonderful celebration and at the same time a very moving occasion, especially when the large audience joined with the choir and participating Mossgrove Singers, in singing “I Have a Dream “, with Mark McGrath ,PSNI Male Choir Conductor ,on Organ at the end. It was very fitting to have the Mossgrove Singers ,and PSNI Choir also perform in the programme,both having been led by Elaine. Amy Ogilby,Flute, and Robin Clinton,Cornet , also both closely associated with Elaine, gave wonderful solo renditions . The programme was Compered by Des Graham ,also long associated with Elaine and the choir. We were pleased to donate a substantial amount to Marie Curie Charity from the proceeds .

It was not then long until our Christmas Concert in St,Cedma's Church,Larne,on the “Winter's Night “ of Saturday Dec.2<sup>nd</sup>. Andrea had prepared a lovely programme of seasonal music enjoyed by the full audience and choir alike. There was a particular treat of the inaugural performance of the Larne Choral Youth Choir (LCYC), Directed by Anne McCambridge. Sporting their new choir T-shirts, the children wowed everyone with their unique sound and polished performance,culminating in a joyous rendition of “Walking in a Winter Wonderland “ with the adult choir and audience,complete with actions !.

After preparatory work over the summer , by Anne and a small volunteer “committee “ from LCS, the LCYC was finally launched on September 13<sup>th</sup>. with the first of their Friday night practices in Larne Market Yard Halls. 19 signed up children aged 7-11,from primary schools across the borough ,attended. Parents,and members of LCS,were treated to their first “mini” concert after practice on Friday Oct.27<sup>th</sup>. The choir continues to meet and practice under the generous voluntary Direction of Anne ,and Accompanist Richard Barnes. Plans are in place to recruit over the summer for next year's intake of children.

We were very fortunate to avail of the talents of Georgina McChesney as our Accompanist for practices leading up to ,and, the concerts themselves, and also at our participation at both Carrick and Larne Music Festivals on Sats.13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.April,respectively. Both were most enjoyable afternoons of singing and listening to other choirs, and learning from Adjudication, with the added bonus of picking up a joint 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 1<sup>st</sup> at Carrick, and a 3<sup>rd</sup>.at Larne.

Our final performance of the year was again in First Larne Church on May 10<sup>th</sup>.at our Spring concert, on the theme of “Home “. We were particularly indebted to Andrea for making it to conduct us while being far from well. This was just another example of the dedication she has shown to the choir throughout the year, not to mention the great fun at practices ! The LCYC also delighted everyone again with their beautiful singing of 4 “Home “ themed pieces,one of which - “Boglands “- composed by a friend of Anne's -, was a world premier performance .It was a great achievement by only 8 children who were able to take part.

We have been delighted to welcome several more new members to the choir this year,bringing our membership to 33.,They have all contributed greatly to the music and the friendship within the choir . Special mention must go to Gwen Dick who has returned to the Alto ranks after singing with ,and Accompanying, the choir for many years in the past.

Extra mural activities have included representation at the Mid and East Antrim Community Groups Cluster meetings. This has enabled us to network with the other local groups and organisations, and pool available resources , as well as promote the choir to the wider public at the

Community Fun Day in the Market Yard on September 9<sup>th</sup>. 2023.

Several members of the choir joined the rest of Larne to welcome the High School Band from Clover,USA, - Larne's twinned town- on March 13<sup>th</sup>.when they put on a spectacular display of music and marching through the town.

To conclude our musical year, several of us were able to take up the offer to the choir to attend a free concert by NI Opera Chorus in the Ulster Hall on May 18<sup>th</sup>. '24, which was a real treat. Rumour has it there may be plans for a choir outing in September to enjoy them in full performance in GOH Belfast.....

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