



December 2007

an extract from "In Tune"

The Quarterly Newsletter from the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir

Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey resounded so beautifully to the voices of the choir invited to sing at the first-ever 'Advent and Hanukkah Festival of Light' event arranged there by the Council of Christians and Jews on Sunday December 2.

In between readings from Christian and Jewish scriptures, interspersed with ancient biblical chants and pieces from the London College of Music Wind Quintet, the choir, from the Abbey's red-lamp lit choir stalls, sang Llef (Deus Salutis) and Rachie accompanied by the famous organ that raised their voices to the highest rooftops I'm sure they have ever sung under!



At this point a special mention must be made. As we arrived for the evening we found that Emily, the Musical Director had succumbed to a sudden nasty bout of food poisoning. Since the deputy conductor was also absent, it fell to one of the top tenors - Keith Rouse - to demonstrate his versatility. He did a sterling job of leading the choir and reining in the over-eager Abbey organist. Well done.

As a finale, we joined the congregation of around 300 to light our own candles from either one of the four Advent Candles placed on a wreath or one of the eight Menorah Candles. Afterwards we were invited to join the organisers for kosher wine, gefilte fish and mince pies in the Jerusalem Chamber.



It was such a joy, not just to be there - sharing a very important harmony of two great faiths in these troublesome times in the Middle East - but to be raised up by the perfectly-clear harmonies of the Oxford Welsh Male Voice Choir in that historical setting.

To the final words by Canon Robert Reiss and Rabbi Mark Soloman - 'Let us go in peace...', may I sing my own praises for the choir: 'You did us all proud...'

Polly Webb

