1984 – 2024

**Dever Singers 40th Anniversary**

**Come and celebrate with us**

The Dever Singers first appeared in 1984 to perform at a ‘Village Weekend’ in Micheldever as *The Micheldever Singers*. They were originally put together by Colin New, son of John New, the local vicar at the time, and Colin continued to lead the choir for over 30 years, steadily extending its repertoire and reputation but maintaining our ethos as a friendly, inclusive, community choir accepting all, with no need to audition. Over the years, the current name of ***The Dever Singers*** was chosento better reflect its membership which had extended throughout the Dever Valley and beyond.

Karen Middleton, a fellow music teacher for Hampshire Music Service joined the choir, initially to sing and then as Colin’s assistant; rehearsing parts, accompanying or standing in to conduct or sing solo. In 2018 when Colin retired to Wales, he introduced Ben Cooper to us as a candidate for the directorship role. Despite Colin leaving ‘very big boots to fill’, Ben was welcomed wholeheartedly and he has continued to lead us with some fresh repertoire and his expert vocal teaching. He also works as a music teacher with the Hampshire Music Service and sings professionally as a Baritone soloist, and as a senior member of Winchester Cathedral Choir.

Over the years members have come and gone, but we still have at least one member from those early days singing with us. Molly Taylor, our beloved accompanist for many years, finally retired and Celia Parkes, who has sung with us over the years now accompanies us in most of our performances.

In March 2020, when the COVID pandemic restrictions stopped choirs meeting and singing together, we were only a couple of weeks away from our Spring concert. Eighteen months later, we tentatively restarted rehearsals and for Christmas 2021 we supported the carol services at local churches whilst we rebuilt our numbers and confidence. Since then, we have continued to recruit new members, and re-recruit old ones and re-establish our concert programme.

Our repertoire varies from classical choral works, sometimes performed in combination with other choirs, to more intimate and relaxed programmes of popular songs and showtunes. Ben has introduced us to some more challenging material of Chilcott and Rutter but the choir members also have a chance to request old favourites or contribute solos or small group pieces.

We are proud to celebrate our 40th Anniversary in 2024 and start the performances planned for this year with a

**Service of Music on Passion Sunday, 17th March, at St. Mary the Virgin, Micheldever at 6pm.**

Please come along to support your local community choir, enjoy listening to the music, join in with a few congregational hymns if you want to and join us for refreshments afterwards. We do not charge for our performances as we want everyone to feel able and welcome to come but, if you think we’ve done a good job, we do have a retiring collection towards church funds.

We are always keen to welcome new people with voices in any range but we are especially in need of more Tenors and Basses, in common with many other choirs.

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