

WONDERFUL DIVERSITY OF VOICES

THE GUESTS FROM ENGLAND PROVIDED A CULTURAL EVENT FOR THE
ECUMENICAL KANTOREI (CHOIR).

The Nantwich Choral Society visited the ecumenical Kantorei. Nantwich is the English twin town of Bischofsheim. However, this invitation was not initiated by the Council but directly by ecumenical Kantorei. Both choirs have been in friendly contact for some time. It must be mentioned that the Nantwich Choral Society, founded in 1972, enjoy great popularity in their own country. The choir sang already at the Earl of Lichfield's, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth II. The professional musician Stephen Buckman has been the conductor of the choir for the past nine years.

It is felt that the accommodation of the English visitors with host families is worth emulating. It is a thought which could be carried forward by the European Community for 1992. So that English guests would feel comfortable in the area of the Lower Main, planning began at the beginning of the year. For this purpose members of the Kantorei formed small groups dealing with different aspects of the organisation. The result of this work could be seen at the climax of the visit, it could also be heard. It is self-evident that anecdotes of the history of the Kantorei were exchanged and much will have become clearer to the English visitors. The founding year is 1987 when a "non-Bischofsheimer", the student Norbirt Becker from Limburg got busy and collected some people who shared his interests. He had wanted to pursue his interest of conducting a choir in his new area of residence Bischofsheim. In spite of several changes of conductors in the next few years, the choir became known and can look back on a series of successful performances. For instance, in 1991 under the guidance of Markus Deggelmann a service in which Gounod's Messe Breve No.7 was performed and was a great success.

The choir considered the exchange with the Nantwich Choral Society under Stephen Buckman as a further milestone in their history. On their arrival their English choral friends were received with great delight by a delegation of the Kantorei. After lunch the guests were shown the town and there was a chance to visit the local museum. A guided tour through Mainz which included a visit to the Cathedral and the Gutenberg Museum followed.

Sunday was used to show the visitors something of the environment of Bischofsheim. Together with their host - families, the English visitors went to the Rheingau where they visited the town of Eltville among other places of interest. The last evening all of them spent at the Castle Reichenstein near Trechtingshausen.

The climax of the exchange was the concert given by the Nantwich Society in the catholic church of Bishofsheim. Quite sometime before the concert began, the church was filled to the last place. The good reputation which the choir enjoys in England must have reached Bischofsheim before their actual arrival. The programme of this concert was the "Gloria" by Vivaldi, a solo for organ, "The bright Seraphims" by G. J. Handel as well as "Revenge Timotheus Cried" and a Requiem for trumpet by Gabriel Fauré. The listeners were rapt with attention, the applause at the end of the concert were never-ending. Certainly the magnificent voices of the two soloists Wright (soprano) and Ravenscroft (Bass) were a major factor. The great skill of the organist Simon Dixon and of the trumpeter Mike Simpson must be mentioned. The Nantwich Choral Society heard many words of praise for their concert and the kantorei could be pleased with a successful exchange.

CAPTION - PICTURE ONE

The Nantwich Choral Society produced a true feast for the ears for the audience as Saturday nights concert in the Christkönigkirche of Bischofsheim.

CAPTION TWO

The Catholic Parish priest Micheal Petschull was delighted to see so many visitors at the concert in his church. Even if the Protestant Church in Bischofsheim had not been in the throes of renovation, there would not have been enough room to accommodate all the visitors there.

SUSTAINED APPLAUSE FOR THE CHOIR FROM NANTWICH
GUESTS ALSO SAW THE RHEINGAU+

Anglo-German friendship is progressing. At the weekend the Nantwich Choral Society of Bischofsheim's twinned with Crewe and Nantwich were guests at the Mainspitze*

This time the invitation was not issued by the Council. However as far as the weekend was concerned, the administration took a leading part. But the singers from across the Channel had been invited by the ecumenical choir of Bischofsheim and were then guests at the Mainspitze. The mayor, Berthold Doss, was delighted to receive them.

The climax of the visit was a choral concert on Saturday night in the very well attended Catholic Christkönigkirche (Church of Christ the King). Religious works by Vivaldi, Handel and Fauré were interpreted with great spirit by choir and soloists alike. The musical director was Stephen Buckman. The musicians received never-ending applause after the concert and great praise during the subsequent meal in the Darmstadter Hof. Contact between the Choral Society and the Kantorei (choir) was established in 1989. (The Choral Society even sang for the Earl of Lichfield, a cousin of the Queen). In the following year, the Catholic/Protestant choir from Bischofsheim invited the English singers to Germany in order to strengthen the partnership between the two European communities not only politically but also the public aspect, and of course, also in order to deepen the friendship between the singers of both communities. The 55 British singers and members of their families were housed privately with residents of both parishes of the Mainspitze and even as far away as Raunheim.

The programme arranged for the visitors shows that "the Kantorei" is a good host. Friday morning, the morning of arrival of the British guests was relaxed.

In the afternoon there was a visit to the local museum, to the town, and finally the reception by the mayor in the Darmstadter Hof.

After a guided tour of Mainz, 40 of the total of 80 singers of the choir (founded in 1972), began to prepare themselves on Saturday afternoon for the evening concert in the Catholic Church. The choir master Stephen Buckman and organist Simon Dixon had arrived on Thursday in order to have an extra day to familiarise themselves with the acoustics and the organ in the church.

Sunday was reserved for a joint bus trip to the Rhine. One of the highlights was a visit to the Choral High Mass in the parish church Sankt Valentin in Kiedrich. Subsequently the Anglo-German travelling group visited the town of Eltville and Castle Reichenstein. However, creature comforts were not overlooked - afternoon and evening meals were taken jointly and substantially.

This morning our British friends had to return home.

+ gau = administrative district, also geographical term.

* geographical term - point of the Main.