

CODA.

The Wychwood Singers will be presenting a "Final Concert" on November 7th, bringing to an end 14 successful years as a Community Choir. One could speculate for ever on the reasons for disbanding; far more important is to go out in style, the choral equivalent of a "Service of Thanksgiving", a celebration of the past 14 years.

Two booklets, "Andante Cantabile" and "The Wychwood Singers – the first ten years", tell the story of the Choir until its 10th Anniversary Concert in 1994. Since then, seven further concerts have followed the well established traditions of a Christmas Carol Concert and a summer Charity Concert. However, by far the most notable events during this period have been two joint ventures with the Hlahol Choir of Prague.

In June 1995, the Czech choir visited the Wychwoods. Members were accommodated by families in Milton, Shipton and Ascott and even further afield – and were entertained by members of the Wychwood Singers and by host families. Many friendships were forged, international relations were cemented, a little Czech was learned (very difficult) and we sang. How we sang! Two joint concerts, one at the Witney Henry Box School and the other at Kingham Hill School, were highly successful. Each choir performed a number of items and then they joined together for further pieces. The Hlahol Choir sang to a full house in Shipton Church on the Sunday evening, and on Monday we all sang again at a farewell party. Abiding memories were of Dr. Sulc's energy and inspiration; and of the lovely singing by the Czech choir, encouraging us all to even greater heights.

In May, 1996, the visit was returned. The Wychwood Singers spent a long weekend in Prague at the time of the Spring Music Festival. Our hosts were choir members, families and friends. Music was everywhere. Our contribution – two concerts, one in a beautiful Prague church, the other in the Hlahol Choir's own hall. The pattern was similar to that in June 1995; each choir sang separately and then we joined together for combined items. A great musical experience enhanced by conducted trips around the beautiful city of Prague and to one of the many castles nearby, and rounded off on the last evening by a rousing party at which each choir tried to out-sing the other in a series of impromptu renditions (we had a list of 37 songs, most of which were attempted during the evening). We had a wonderful time.

So many happy memories. Over the years, the Wychwood Singers have raised tens of thousands of pounds for local charities, have been privileged to work with Dame Peggy Ashcroft, Leslie Crowther and Richard Stilgoe, have sung in churches, schools and village halls all around the area. We aim to make November 7th a special night, a celebration of an outstandingly successful local group, so that, even if the Choir will be singing no more, the melody will linger on -----

Dennis J. Iles.

Notes: Coda – conclusion, concluding part.

The concert on November 7th. will be held at the
New Beaconsfield Hall, Shipton-u-Wychwood, starting at 7.30 p.m.
Further details and tickets from 830050.