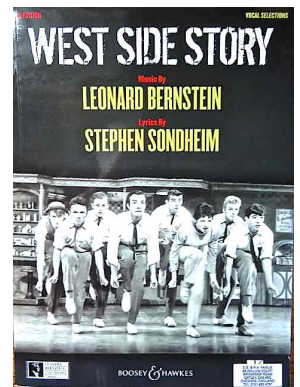
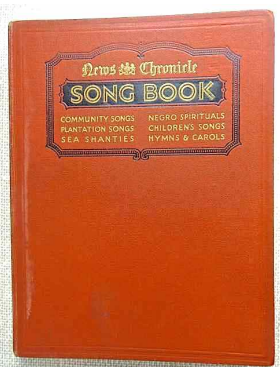
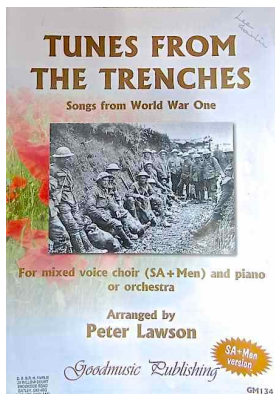


CHEADLE AND GATLEY U3A
SINGING FOR PLEASURE
2011 - 2022



Our final Singing for Pleasure under the guidance of Barbara and Dorothy,
on Tuesday 28th June 2022



The Beginning of the Cheadle and Gatley U3A Singing for Pleasure Group

Article written by Barbara Wingard for the September 2021 Newsletter
in which we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of the formation of our U3A.

It was a very rainy day in June 2011 for the first meeting of the Cheadle and Gatley U3A. Reluctantly I took my car and was amazed to find no available parking anywhere near the URC, so had to drive some distance before finding a space.

I will never forget entering the packed hall to listen to those welcoming us and explaining about the setting up of this new U3A group. Most memorable of all were the words of John Ellison, the U3A North West Region Trustee, who was guiding us. He said in a very firm voice:

'A U3A will succeed only if members volunteer to lead Interest Groups.'

He urged anyone with specialist knowledge or interests and enthusiasm to come forward.

As I came from a very musical background, had sung in many choirs and conducted small groups I decided there and then to volunteer to run a singing group.

At a second meeting 2 weeks later, around the hall there were arranged tables and chairs, a cluster for each Interest Group, with the name of the leader and the group clearly printed. Prospective Group members wandered around and spoke with the leaders about the group. Eventually I had 15 people sign up. At least a third said they had never sung in a choir before, with the rest having had experience at school or afterwards. Some of the original singers are still in the choir today.

At our first rehearsal most of us were in a queue at the entrance while a brave soul at the front struggled with the keys! This gave me the chance to move round and chat to people. Suddenly a lone man appeared and as I approached to welcome him he turned and fled!

What did we sing at our first practice? It had to be something well-known so we sang songs of the British Isles such as *Rule Britannia*, *Loch Lomond*, *Men of Harlech* and *Londonderry Air*. It was a good start. At our second meeting we got a bit more organised with Nuala Lynn offering to keep the register, and Ginny Stephenson in charge of the tea. A little later, to my great relief, Dorothy Walker started to accompany the choir, and what a great support she has been over the years.

Gradually a few brave men joined the group and we eventually had a reasonable bass line. Among the male singers was Ian Ewing who with his guitar skills and vast folk song repertoire was persuaded to do a regular session after the tea break to give the conductor a chance to sit down.

Folk songs with guitar were a great addition to our repertoire, which has included music from the 16th century onwards. In recent times our theme has been post-war American musicals. Starting with *Oklahoma* we found that two members of the choir had attended very early performances. Lee Fairlie had seen the show with her father when it opened in New York in 1945. Rosemary Round told us about her visit to see the show in 1951 at the Opera House in Manchester where it was given a pre-London run.

Other musicals followed such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *My Fair Lady* and *West Side Story*, which was possibly our favourite with excellent arrangements for sopranos, altos and basses. We managed pretty well and have been able to include them not only in our U3A concerts but also on other occasions as well. These have included performances at Stockport Town Hall, local care homes and at three churches. At one of the latter in Cheadle Hulme we presented a Victorian musical entertainment which was one of our best efforts. However, perhaps our greatest challenge was the *Hallelujah Chorus*, which was very well received as part of the Christmas entertainment in 2017.

Singing for Pleasure: A Pictorial History

Compiled by Lesley Witton



An early meeting in the former middle hall at the URC in the autumn of 2012



Our second Christmas performance!

At the First World War Commemoration Day in November, 2014
we sang a selection of songs from *Tunes from the Trenches*
And Barbara encouraged audience participation!



In 2015 we enjoyed singing songs from *Fiddler on the Roof* and performed these for the St James' Friendship Group and for the U3A Christmas Party



In **2016** we entertained a visiting ukulele group before they demonstrated their skills to us and encouraged members to join the ukulele group that Ian had offered to set up



The Christmas performance was from *West Side Story*



2017 brought Barbara's 90th Birthday and the committee presented her with a rose, appropriately called *Benjamin Britten*!



At the next meeting of the Singing Group, a splendid cake was presented





The cake had a suitable musical inscription;
Barbara and Dorothy also received tokens as a 'thank you' for all their hard work over the year



We performed what Barbara has described as 'perhaps our greatest musical challenge' at the **2017 U3A Christmas party: the *Hallelujah Chorus!***



In July 2019, we performed at a Victorian Tea Party at the URC in Cheadle Hulme and sang some songs from the period



Our **2019** Christmas presentation for the U3A was a selection of songs from *My Fair Lady*



After a two year break it was wonderful to get back together again
– socially distanced, of course, in September **2021**



Our Barbara's Song

First performed in the early days of the group, this was also our final song in our final programme.

Dear Everybody

Barbara wanted me to sing , *The Policeman's Song* (G + S) at our last meeting before the recess, but I think you've heard it often enough !

So I have written some alternative words for it with which I hope you will join me.
She knows nothing about this so it may come as a surprise to her !!!

Dennis

(Sung to the music of *The Policeman's Song* (Gilbert and Sullivan)

Soloist

When our Barbara wants all to sing a song -
We try our best but somehow get it wrong -
We stammer and we stutter just a bit
And then, poor soul, she nearly has a fit -
Our highs and lows are simply just amazing -
As the altos and the rest of us combine -
Then at last I think I've finally found my music
Well I had it in my pocket all the time

Choir

(sing a song)
(get it wrong)
(just a bit)
(has a fit)
(just amazing)
(we combine)
(found his music) *slow this down*
(all the time)

OH !

Chorus (All)

When you're singing for your pleasure, it's just fine, it's just fine.
For singing for your pleasure is sublime every time !

We sing ballads, songs, and snatches, that we do	(that we do)
The Marseillaise and Rule Britannia too	(yes it's true)
Then it's Bobby Shafto, Yellow Bird and Cielito Lindo too	
And finish up with Berkeley Square for you	(just for you)
And now at last we have a little music	(lovely music)
Played on silver flute and great Hawaiian strings	(hear those strings)
It's exotic, it's exciting and terrific	(just terrific)
And our Barbara thinks it's really just the thing	(just the thing)

OH!

Chorus (All)

When you're singing for your pleasure, it's just fine, it's just fine.
For singing for your pleasure is sublime - every time!

Performances given by the Cheadle and Gatley Singing For Pleasure Group

2011

December
U3A Christmas Party

2012

8th May
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley

25th May
National Friendship Day, Upper Room, Cheadle

2nd October
Age UK Day, Stockport Town Hall

13th November
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley

December
U3A Christmas party

19th December
Withington Methodist Church, Assist Group

2013

20th November
URC Women's Guild, Gatley

11th December
U3A Christmas Party

14th December
St Philip's, Cheadle, Seniors' Group

2014

25th February
Age UK Day Centre, Crossacres Road

11th March
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley

11th November
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley

12th November
U3A World War 1 Commemoration Day
(*Tunes from the Trenches*)

2015

10th November
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley
(*Fiddler on the Roof*)

9th December
U3A Christmas party (*Fiddler on the Roof*)

2016

8th November
St James' Friendship Group, Gatley

9th November
U3A Manchester Celebration Day
(selection of Manchester songs)

December
U3A Christmas party (*West Side Story*)

2017

March
URC Women's Group

15th May
Abney Court Rest Home, Cheadle

December
U3A Christmas Party (*Hallelujah Chorus*)

2018

17th January
URC Women's Group, Gatley

December
U3A Christmas party (*Oklahoma*)

2019

19th June
Victorian Tea Party, URC Cheadle Hulme.
(music hall and other songs from the period)

December
U3A Christmas party (*My Fair Lady*)

Our final session and the celebration

Tribute by Lesley Witton on behalf of the group

Barbara Wingard was one of our first Group Leaders as she rose to the challenge laid down by John Ellison at our launch meeting in June 2011 for anyone with specialist knowledge to come forward. As she had had a great deal of experience in the musical field she decided to start a singing group – not a ‘choir’, but a group for anyone who enjoyed singing for pleasure. Right from the start she inspired us with her enthusiasm and encouragement and within a few months we were performing at the U3A Christmas party.

More performances followed at various local venues, such as Stockport Town Hall, different church halls and care homes, and we averaged three public performances a year. Barbara really brought out the best in us and gave us wonderful opportunities to share in music-making which most of us would not otherwise have had. It was exhilarating to raise our voices in well-known songs from the shows and even the Hallelujah chorus!

Barbara was ably supported by Dorothy Walker, our pianist, who had to cope with the vagaries of the hall piano and the limitations of our voices, which she did by transcribing several of our pieces into a more manageable key! Barbara and Dorothy provided us with fortnightly sessions, but they also gave up a lot of their time in planning and preparation. Thanks to their dedication a large number of our members have been able to share in the joy of communal singing and we have all felt the benefits. We will miss them greatly.



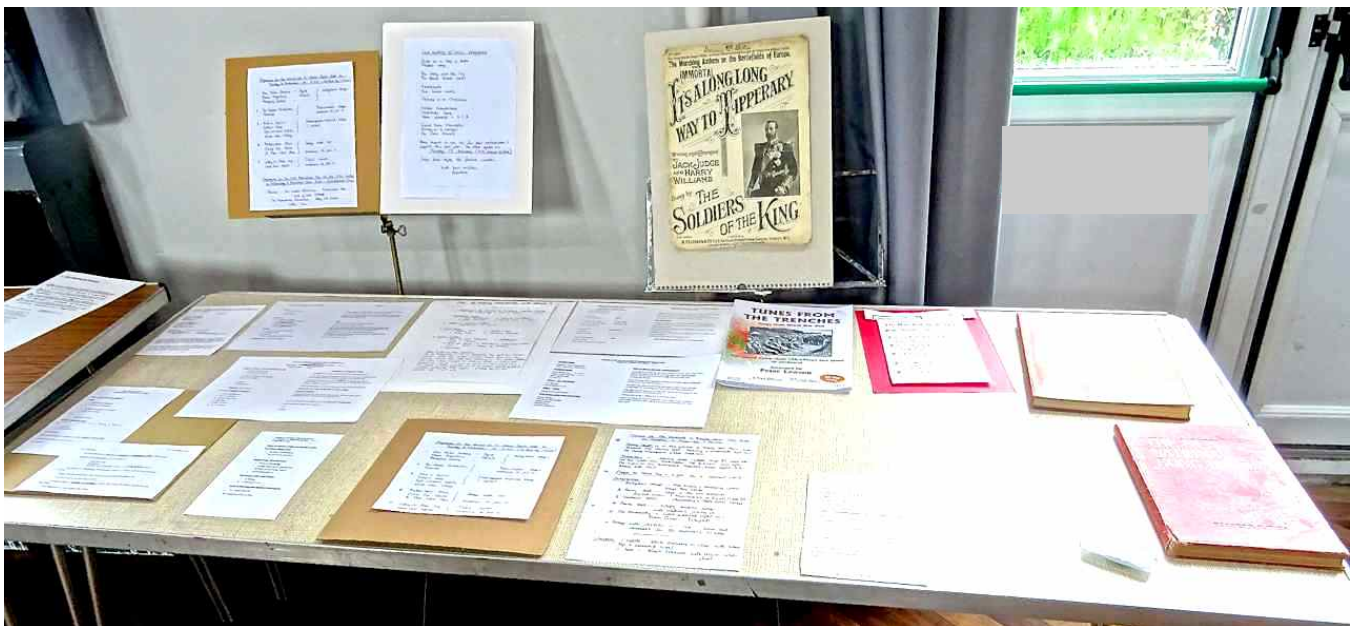
We had a splendid farewell session with a display in photos of the Singing Group’s history and other mementoes of the music we have enjoyed. For the first half, Barbara and Dorothy took us through some of our favourites in chronological order. We then had the speeches and presentations followed by cake and Prosecco! It was so good to see former group members and to reminisce. We resumed to sing a few more songs and the session finished with a surprise rendition of ‘*Barbara’s Song*’ to the tune of ‘*The Policeman’s Song*’ by Gilbert and Sullivan, which greatly amused the eponymous recipient!



Jenni and Ian lead in *Our Barbara's Song*



Display of articles and the Pictorial History



Some of the music used over the years



