

200 people celebrate our 200th birthday in Wetherby

On 23rd March in Wetherby over 200 people attended a concert of sea music at St James Church to not only celebrate the 50th anniversary of Wetherby Choral Society but also the 200th anniversary of the RNLI.

In her own words, Heather Marsh (Chairman, Wetherby Choral Society) describes this memorable event:

'When we agreed that our 50th anniversary concert was to have a sea theme, it provided an ideal opportunity to work with the RNLI towards creating a joint and memorable production as part of the 'Sing to Save Lives' bicentenary celebration. I'm so glad we did, as it turned into a delightful mutual collaboration! Many months of



planning involving Wetherby Choral Society and the RNLI paved the way for a stunning evening of music and reflective thought. The nautical programme included the hymn *Eternal Father* in acknowledgement of its importance to the RNLI, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*, Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, and Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony*. Our Director of Music John Dunford wove his magic, masterfully conducting everyone to achieve a dramatic evening of beautiful music.



All agreed that the concert was stunning, with marvellous performances by the large orchestra, three renowned soloists and a rousing performance by the choir.

The RNLI flag flew from the mast of St James Church. A life-size replica model of a lifeboat volunteer greeted people as they arrived, and a silent PowerPoint presentation within the Church scrolled through historical photographs as well as those of current lifeboats and lifeboat crew members. All of the choir members and orchestra proudly wore yellow welly badges. In acknowledgment of the collaborative planning, Clive Rand delivered a warm and thought provoking introduction to raise awareness of the work of the RNLI, and the amazing volunteers. This enhanced the drama of the musical evening as we all thought of those brave volunteers going out to sea to save others at a moment's notice. And the retiring collection for the RNLI raised a magnificent sum of £610.

We really did 'Sing to Save Lives'!



Pictured top centre: Our flag flying from the church tower. Above left: A vintage model of a crew member kindly lent by RNLI Knaresborough branch. Centre: Clive Rand welcomes the audience and performers. Above left: Clive in conversation with Director of Music John Dunford. Above right: Yellow Welly badges were in popular demand with performers and the audience.