# 2006 Proms at St Jude's breaks the pound barrier

Festival organisers are celebrating after the 2006 festival brings in £55,000 surplus for charity.

No sooner had the last notes of Elgar's Land of Hope And Glory drifted away into the night sky over Central Square on Saturday night than the crew of the Proms at St Jude's literally began to fold their tents and fade into the suburban background for another year.

The traditional Last Night – with suitable acknowledgement to that event in Kensington – had brought to an end an exceptional week of music-making that reinforces a widening view that the festival is weight-for-weight one of the premier summer music events in the metropolis.

But more than that, it was also yet another record-breaking season that saw some 4,000 patrons attend the lunchtime and evening concerts.

As treasurer Simon Tesh and Last Night conductor Robert Max had indicated, organisers confirmed on Sunday it had indeed been a very good year. Turnover broke through the £100,000 barrier by a substantial amount and, following expenses, the Proms will distribute £55,000 to the two designated charities – Toynbee Hall and the North London Hospice.

The transformation from homespun event to something heavyweight did not, of course, take place over night.

However, whatever the catalyst that brought about the sea-change, the organising committee can be proud that it has not only established a worthy set of artistic credentials but has also succeeded in becoming the core event of the Hampstead Garden Suburb year.

The achievement is all the more notable since a 10-strong committee, of whom only three have a background in music or music education, manages the entire scheme.

One cannot overlook the role played by the Proms President, the Rev Alan Walker, Vicar of St Jude's, without whose co-operation the event would be a non-starter. His cameo part as host for most evenings has a special place in the proceedings.

The committee's efforts, entirely voluntary, are supported by a team of volunteers across the age spectrum, who share duties as stewards, car park attendants and sellers of sandwiches, soft drinks and the Proms' very own wine – a Merlot and a Sauvignon blanc chosen and appropriately labelled by the shippers at Waddesdon Manor.

*Henry Kelly, introducing the First Night concert sponsored by the Residents Association said "The Proms committee are so professional they should take over the Kenwood Concerts." He is seen here with Richard Clegg, Susie Gregson and Rev Alan Walker.*

If the management of the Proms seasons has now become slick – and there would be no reason why it should not be otherwise after 13 years – the committee are also residents and have worked tirelessly to ensure that that local feel has not been lost. This has been of enormous help with the efforts to underwrite the huge costs involved, either through sponsorship, advertising in the promotional leaflet or the handsome Proms programme, which this year featured a glossy full colour cover.

Another important factor in establishing a strong brand loyalty is that the Proms are charity-driven and echo the support given to the Hospice through the local support group.

The Hospice has been a beneficiary since the start of the Proms. It was originally arranged as a one-off effort organised by Susie Gregson as a thank-you for the care her parents had received during their final days.

Toynbee Hall is a beneficiary because of its close associations with Dame Henrietta Barnett and her husband, who founded the facility to help the disadvantaged of the East End.

Other good causes have benefited from the proceeds of the Proms and the sums that have been raised run into tens of thousands of pounds.

The Proms committee will not lie dormant until next year, however. They are arranging a one-off autumn Prom with the outstanding vocal group Tenebrae. They will give a concert of Russian music by candlelight on October 22 in St Jude's. And the 2007 Proms will take place from June 16 to 24.

DAVID SONIN

*RA chairman David Lewis enjoyed the strawbrry tea in the sunshine.*

*Cllr Andrew Harper with police sergeant Michael Edmondson.*

*Trust volunteers Angus Walker and Judith Chaney.*

*Helen Roose with one of her finds, the Bomond Piano Trio.*

*Music critic Barry Millington and trumpeter Deborah Calland from Denman Drive.*

## Wordsearch winner

Vegetables certainly seem to have whetted your appetites!

Congratulations to Joan Rees Phillips, this month's winner. She and her husband, whom she lost in 1979, came to Brim Hill in 1955 where they brought up their four children.

She is a talented flower arranger and an active member of the Horticultural Society and the Theatre Club.

## WORDSEARCH

In the box below are concealed 20 names of wild flowers of FOUR or more letters; and an extra one highlighted to start you off (don't include it in your total!). Names may be read in all directions, straight or diagonally. Entries should be listed on paper or a postcard and sent to Diana Woodfield, 5 Erskine Hill, NW11 6HA with your name, address and phone number. The closing date is 1st December. The sender of the first correct (or nearly correct) entry will win a £20 voucher from Joseph's Bookstore.

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DIANA WOODFIELD


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### SPRING WORDSEARCH ANSWER

The 20 different vegetables were: Artichoke, Aubergine, Bean, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Courgette, Garlic, Leek, Onion, Parsnip, Peas, Pepper, Spinach, Sweetcorn, Turnip.

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