



Press information released 25th February 2017

In April 2014 the Peace Through Folk Trust launched a four year centenary commemoration with '**1914 – 2014 - In Celebration of Peace**', a festival at The Foxlowe Arts Centre celebrating the power of songs, music and verse in pursuit of peace, friendship and reconciliation.

Over the ensuing four years the Leek based Not For Profit Trust has delivered dozens of events, mostly to sell out audiences, has supported various performers in related activities and has generated of over £3,000 surplus which it has donated to its adopted charities - UNHCR, Save The Children, War Child, Médecins Sans Frontières and the Tim Parry - Jonathan Ball Foundation For Peace.

That event, in 2014 also hosted a singing workshop led by Janet Russell – her infectious enthusiasm brought about the creation of The Peace Through Folk choir, led by Janet and ably assisted by Penny Barfield. After the initial six month Janet persuaded Lester Simpson to take up the baton of Musical Director.

The choir has become one of the leading showcases for The Peace Through Folk Trust. It meets at least three time a month and has developed a reputation for not only making a great four part harmony sound but also for maintaining a clear and firm focus on its reason for existence.

The choir's catalogue now contains over 80 songs dedicated to the celebration of Peace, Friendship, & Reconciliation and to the promotion of social justice. It has performed at numerous festivals and events over the last four years.

In 2017 Peace Through Folk Choir sang to packed house at -

- '**Coda**' the Coope Boyes and Simpson farewell tour, May 11th Foxlowe Leek, which was filmed by Ray Johnson and David Barrs and will be available to Choir members and Friends of Peace Through Folk during March 2018.
- **The Great Get Together** Weekend , Leek, June 18th
- **The Folk Gathering**, Alstonefield, in September 15th /17th, much of which was filmed by David Barrs and can be viewed on Youtube.
- '**Standing in Line**' Peace commemoration, November 12th Foxlowe
- '**We three sings**' Young Uns Concert, November 16th Biddulph,

2018 promises to be a busy time for the choir, particularly as it completes the centenary commemorations and continue to sing for a better world for our children to inherit. We are very much on the campaign trail.

See overleaf for the choir's programme for 2018 so far, and other interesting news.

- **Chester Folk Festival** Kelsall - 23rd to Sunday 27th May
- **The Great get Together**, June 24th Foxlowe singing picnic celebrating the life of Jo Cox MP
- **Moira Furnace Folk Festival** – Sunday 19th August.
- **The Folk Gathering, Alstonefield** 14th to 16th September
- **Peace Concert Macclesfield** Sept 23rd TBA
- **Peace Day** – Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, 11/11/2018
- **Winter concerts** with various guest artistes. TBA

The hard work of the choir under the leadership of Lester and Penny was recognised recently with a great accolade in the form of the following invitation from the USA.

It is with great pleasure that I extend an invitation to you and the Peace Through Folk Choir to participate in the New York Premiere performance of Patrick Hawes' The Great War on the DCINY Concert Series. This performance is planned to take place in Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium on Sunday, November 11, 2018 under the baton of composer/conductor Patrick Hawes. Congratulations to you and your singers on this wonderful achievement and recognition!

Jeff Binner MA, DCINY – **Carnegie Hall New York**

This is an extract from our unanimously agreed response to the offer -

We were honoured that you invited our choir to take part in the New York City Premiere production of Patrick Hawes' Great War Symphony in 2018. It is a fantastic opportunity to go to New York and sing in Carnegie Hall.

But unfortunately it is not for us.

The Peace through Folk choir is a community that takes our mission very seriously and in that regard Celebrating, Peace, Friendship and Reconciliation are our non-negotiable watch words.

The message we have all worked so hard to promote over the last few years is this; that war is a terrible, wasteful, obscene thing that ordinary people often don't remember, or put to one side, in order to honour the dead. Of course their lives and their sacrifice should be remembered, but our big mission is that we need to look to the future.

Having said all of that we should together look at the fantastic opportunities that our chance meeting has exposed, we could live stream a song into your event and participate in a concert at the Carnegie Hall at another time which would be focussed on peace, friendship and reconciliation.

Our choir has members of all ages. Many of us are representative of the 'protest movement' that had much of its birth in your country in the 1960's.

Many of us were on those barricades in the '60's and still have that fire in our bellies. . And we still march in even bigger numbers today.

In 2018 it is time to look back through the eyes of a grieving father, Rudyard Kipling

'Common form'

"If any question why we died,

Tell them, because our fathers lied".

For more information about The Peace Through Folk Trust and its choir please see our website www.peacethroughfolk.org or email peacethroughfolk@gmail.com or phone 0780 552 9492