

MESSIAH

As part of the Club's very successful weekend in Birmingham, we enjoyed a delightful Saturday evening at the newly-renovated Town Hall for a wonderful performance of Handel's *Messiah* by the renowned choir, The Sixteen, and Orchestra.

It is 175 years since the Hall was opened in 1834 and it is a venue close to the heart of Birmingham and the surrounding area. It was built to house the famous Triennial Music Festivals which brought crowds of music lovers to Birmingham to hear some of the world's best choral music, Handel's *Messiah* being at the heart of those festivals. The Hall was closed in 1996 for renovation and re-opened in October 2007.

We were privileged to hear a brilliant performance of *Messiah*, conducted by Harry Christophers, with excellent soloists: Gillian Keith (soprano), Catherine Wyn-Rogers (mezzo), John Mark Ainsley (tenor) and Christopher Purves (baritone). The resounding standing ovation by the audience at the end of the concert made this a truly memorable evening and would have made the builders of this Hall 175 years ago feel very proud. The only pity was that we did not have time to hear the splendid 1834 organ by William Hill in the Hall, but a good reason to go back in the future.

Many thanks, Rosemary, for arranging this.
John Leeds