

Widcombe Song

©Gwen Williamson

Take a stroll up Lyncombe Hill,
Rosemount Lane and Lyncombe Vale
Streams are rippling, hills are crippling
Sing merrily Widcombe song

*South of the river, the views make you quiver
The bells of St. Thomas, a ring and a promise,
Friends to meet in the pubs in the high street,
Sing merrily Widcombe song*

Widcombe Crescent so quiet and pleasant
Past the Tynning to Widcombe locks
Barges gliding, ducklings hiding
Sing merrily Widcombe song

South of the river.....

See the rainbow light the skies
Over the hills where Widcombe lies;
Fields and pathways
Chase the dark days
Catch the sun-rays in Widcombe song.

South of the river....

Sung by Sophie Bevan with Gwen Williamson (piano)

The Widcombe Association would like to thank:

- Ian Gilchrist, leader of the Widcombe Mummers, who had the idea for a competition in the first place.
- All 25 of our song-writers, who have produced some wonderful songs. (There are some fine songs that have not made it to the final, many because they were not relevant enough to Widcombe; we hope these will live on elsewhere.)
- Joe Bennett of Bath Spa University, who gave his free time and recording expertise to help show many of the songs in their best light.
- All those who performed on the recordings.
- The Beechen Cliff School Folk band under Alison Nourse who composed some wonderful tunes, for which we still need some words. We hope you enjoy the boys' performance this evening.
- And last, but not least, our wonderful judges.

©We should point out that all the songs in this collection are **copyright**. I am sure that many will live on to be part of life for us in Widcombe and I am confident that at the end of the evening we will have a fitting and memorable 'Song for Widcombe'.

Paddy Doyle

A Song for Widcombe The Grand Final

21st October 2009

at

St Matthews Church, Widcombe

The competition
attracted 25 entries,
11 of which will be played for you
and are included in this
souvenir programme.
(we asked the judges to select 10,
but the standard was
too high!)



A Widcombe Association Production

The Judges

Steve Henwood Steve is a singer, musician, writer, even sometimes a songwriter (so he knows how difficult it is), and co-director of Bath Fringe Festival. He was a music journalist for far too long, and programmes the live music at the very groovy Bell pub (not in Widcombe) and for stages at Trowbridge Village Pump and farmer Eavis' garden party. When arriving in Bath, first moved to Combe Down so knows all the ways through Widcombe from walking home late at night. Member of Widcombe Social Club (very social), and a regular at Bath Folk Club, Widcombe Rising, and all the most salubrious events.

Ralph Oswick Ralph has had two jobs since leaving art school...mortuary attendant and director/performer (later to be rather grandly dubbed Artistic Director) at the Natural Theatre. The first lasted a year, the second forty! With the Naturals he has helped forge their unique style which has become one of Bath's foremost cultural exports, having now been seen and enjoyed in over 70 countries. Despite all this arty jet-setting, it is part of Ralph's job to ensure the company remains firmly rooted in the cultural life of its home city. This is evident in his being co-organiser of the much loved Widcombe Rising street party, and perhaps more important for the company's legacy, the £250k restructuring of Widcombe Institute as an up-to-date production centre and creative learning facility. Some would say that Ralph has a third job, that of aide-de-camp to that doyenne of all things cultural, Lady Margaret. Ralph would say that this is not so much a job, more a duty to the nation.

Roger Rolls Roger attempted to play his neighbour's piano when he was four. She kindly suggested he should have some lessons. It proved a disaster for both teacher and pupil. Ten years passed before any further tuition was contemplated, this time with a pianist who led a dance band in Taunton and was a fan of Russ Conway. Roger was more enamoured with jazz and blues and after joining the Cambridge University Jazz Club, became its resident pianist whilst studying for a medical degree. Nowadays, Roger enjoys a wide range of music and has occasionally been heard playing boogie-woogie in various venues around Bath.

Rosie Upton Rosie's first attempt at public performance was as a soloist aged 8 in a prestigious music festival competition. She sang the first verse and then the final but missed out the middle of the song. A bemused pianist continued to play whilst Rosie stood in silence, burst into tears and ran from the stage. Undeterred by this unfortunate experience she became a successful folk singer for a while though all her attempts at song writing were met with derision. On the basis of - if you can't do it yourself, criticise others - she became a music journalist and continues to write every week in the Bath Chronicle.

The Beechen Cliff School Folk Band

Starting us off this evening will be the young musicians of the Beechen Cliff School Folk Band under their director Alison Nourse. The boys composed seven wonderful tunes for Widcombe which, although not submitted for judging in the song contest, were felt to be of such standard that they deserved a broader airing, particularly here in Widcombe. We are really grateful to Alison and the boys for agreeing to entertain us with the

World Premiere of their Widcombe Suite.

The Natural Place to Be

© Paul Feldwick

I'd wandered all over the city of Bath
Bewildered with crescents and squares
I sat me down at the river's bank
Beset by seagulls and cares;
I spotted a man with a flowery shirt
And a twinkle in his eye
So I asked him which was his favourite place
And this was his reply:

[refrain]

Just walk right over the Ha'p'ny Bridge
The price of admission's free
The finest part of the City of Bath
Is there for you to see:
Yes, walk straight over the Ha'p'ny Bridge
I'll take you along with me:
You'll find that when you're in Widcombe,
It's the natural place to be.

I followed him over the Ha'p'ny Bridge,
Turned left at the Temperance Hall
And there I found a parade of shops
With treats for one and all;
I found fiddlestick makers and coffee shops too,
Fires, cookers and works of fine art,
A marvellous Ram and a Ring Of bright Bells
And a well endowed White Hart.

So- walk right over the Ha'penny Bridge etc.

I followed my nose through the paths and the lanes,
I ventured up hills and down dales
I found a Palladian Bridge and a lake
And charming umbrageous vales;
There were churches both ancient and modern to see
Fine manors and cottages old
And a place where every New Year's Day
There's a battle of Champions Bold.

So- walk right over the Ha'p'ny Bridge etc.

Paul Feldwick: vocals & piano

Joe Bennett: everything else.

Widcombe Beholders © Peter Barrett & Ian Gilchrist

Roll the years back, we are the beholders
We see Widcombe rising for many a year
The peasants and pilgrims, the millers and miners
The wharfmen and weavers, they all mingled here.

Roll the years on and roll the years over
We tell as it was so we can see clear
Our village, our city, was built by their labours
Stone rolled down through Widcombe, a spa built from here.

Roll the year off, we are the unfolders
We roll Widcombe forward into the next year
So mellow the stone, weave green with the gold as
From high cliff to river the future grows here.

at New Year

Roll the year on and roll out the Mummers
From Lyncombe to Smallcombe we are without peer
Just give up you cash in exchange for our capers
We'll promise to leave you in peace till next year.

at Widcombe Rising

Roll the years round the hub of their summers
Still rises the wellspring resurgent and clear
The sun's on our vale, the jug's full of ale
Behold Widcombe rising, so revel and hear
The Rising of Widcombe reverberate here

Peter, Anne and Eilis Barrett: vocals
Heather Minnion: concertina & recorder
Amanda Dornan: guitar
Ian Gilchrist: banjo
Joe Bennett: snare

Widcombe Rising

© Joe Bennett

As I walked down this fair Parade one sunny day in June
I met a man along the way who said "good afternoon"
I asked him for directions, to get to Pult'ney Weir
He said "If I was going there, I wouldn't start from here!"

So let's all join the Mummers
Listen can't you hear?
It's the sound of Widcombe Rising
And we sing it every year oh yes we sing it every year!

I asked him if he had a job; he cheerfully replied
"I sit by the canal all day (just) watching for the tide
And since I started work here, I think I've done some good
From Allie Park to Beechen Cliff there hasn't been a
flood!"

So let's all join the Mummers...

He said he lived in Abbey View; had been there all his life
And now that he was ninety-two, he wanted for a wife
He said "I'll love her truly, and give her all I can
As long as she lives less than fifty paces from The Ram!"

So let's all join the Mummers...

Vocals & all instruments: Joe Bennett

WIDCOMBE AWAKE!

Words: ©Yvonne Whiteman
Music: ©Philip Evry

Chorus

*Wid-combe, awake!
Throw off your iron band,
No more a suburb you shall be,
but Glorious Village stand! (x2)*



*Too long the thundering juggernauts have ploughed their mindless path,
rudely rousing all who dream at Widcombe's emerald hearth.
Let Claverton Street return to peace! Instead of horn and brake
let Widcombe spend the livelong day midst coffee, ale and cake*

Chorus

*The leathery winos, beggars, bums shall add their rusty cry
to bargemen, mummers, toddlers at the village school nearby.
Let chemist's pills return to gold, the Garden Centre ring
with rubber wellies, compost bags and newborn infants' din.*

Chorus

*The dead shall rattle in their graves from north to Southcombe Vale,
and Henry Fielding, Mr Pope shall sigh: 'Hail, Widcombe, Hail!'
Let Prior Park, Crowe Hall grandly sound their hilly hymns of praise,
and Natural Theatre's thespian boot direct your festive days*

Final Chorus (the following lines are inserted between the repeats):

*The leaping deer shall sound your name, 'Widcombe!' the badgers growl,
'Widcombe!' the buzzards in the wood, 'Widcombe!' each passing owl.*

(Alternative Chorus)

*Wid-combe, awake! Take up a hearty dram,
And raise a toast from Royal Oak to Ring o Bells and Ram
Widcombe awake! Throw off your iron band,
No more a suburb you shall be, but Glorious Village stand!*

Sung by Patrick Colbourne with Philip Evry (piano)

The Widcombe Mummers' New Year's Song © Dennis Silverwood

We're come today to give our play from Prior Park to Holloway
And we wish you a very good year, we wish you a very good year
From Prior Park to Holloway we wish you a very good year

We've doctors, devils, knights and kings, horses, heroes, pig that sing
To summon in the New Year to summon in the New Year
We've horses heroes, pigs that sing to summon in the New Year

And we will show you a miracle of a doctor's cure for those who're ill
And some would say he can bring alive those half way up Ralph Allen's Drive
And some would say he can bring alive those halfway up Ralph Allen's Drive

Us mummers poor we cannot pay the doctor's fee we're sad to say we do not live
In Perrymead or Lyncombe Hill or Greenway Lane; we do not live
In Perrymead or Lyncombe Hill or Greenway Lane

We need someone to save our necks and thus appeareth Georgius Rex
Our champion will find a way to rescue us this New Year's Day
Our champion will find a way to rescue us this New Year's Day

We'll take our tale round Widcombe Hill of strife and life and the medical bill
Widcomers all, may you never be ill and we wish you a Happy New Year
Widcomers all, may you never be ill and we wish you a Happy New Year

Sung by Paul Feldwick & Joe Bennett



The Widcombe Association was formed in 1981 to preserve and enhance
Widcombe and its environs.

Amongst our current campaigns are:

- The **Rossiter Road scheme** to take through traffic out of Widcombe Parade, our village street, and give us back a pleasant, safe and unpolluted atmosphere to enjoy the shops and hostelryes.
- The **Two Tunnels Greenway** which we support, but feel that residents' views must be heard
- The **Abbey Cemetery** which we have worked on for some years and wish to preserve for the future

We also provide a varied social programme, and are major supporters of Bath's biggest and best street party: Widcombe Rising.

WA members get discounts at local traders.

You can join tonight (and have your entrance fee refunded) or have a look at our website:

www.widcombeassociation.org.uk



Widcombe, You're a Jewel!

© Paddy Doyle

Chorus:

Widcombe you're a jewel! Widcombe you're a dear
Widcombe you're my heart's delight at any time of year

From high above on Widcombe Hill Macaulay gazes down
At the woods and wolds of Widcombe and the spires of Sulis town
From Rainbow Wood to Beechen Cliff he has a view so fine
It lifts the heart and who could part from Widcombe in her prime

Chorus

The wat'ring holes of Widcombe are known from far and near
For there's no place quite like Widcombe Mall to have yourself some cheer
In the Ram or in the Royal Oak or the good old Ring o' Bells
In the White Hart Inn it's not a sin to mingle with the swells

Chorus

The Lansdown lass is lovely, and the Greenway girl is grand
But the winsome wench of Widcombe is known throughout the land
For gentlemen who come to Bath to take the healing waters
It's a privilege to cross the bridge for Widcombe's darling daughters.

Chorus

Oh the common folk of Widcombe can mingle with the best
In the street good Lady Margaret distributes her largesse
She switches on the Christmas lights to give us all good cheer
And on New Year's Day the Mummers play to welcome in the year.

Chorus

Old Rossiter's a churlish chap who only goes one way
Which leaves for us in Widcombe Mall a cruel price to pay
But Widcombe folk are sturdy stock, we won't admit defeat
We'll never rest till traffic's pest is driven from our street.

Chorus

If you come down to Widcombe Mall some afternoon in June
You'll hear the sounds of happy folk and a merry mummers tune
With sky so bright and feelings light, the air so full of cheer
It's not surprising Widcombe's rising higher every year.

Chorusx2

Paddy Doyle: vocals & guitar

Ali Nourse: fiddle & vocals

Joe Bennett: guitar & everything else!

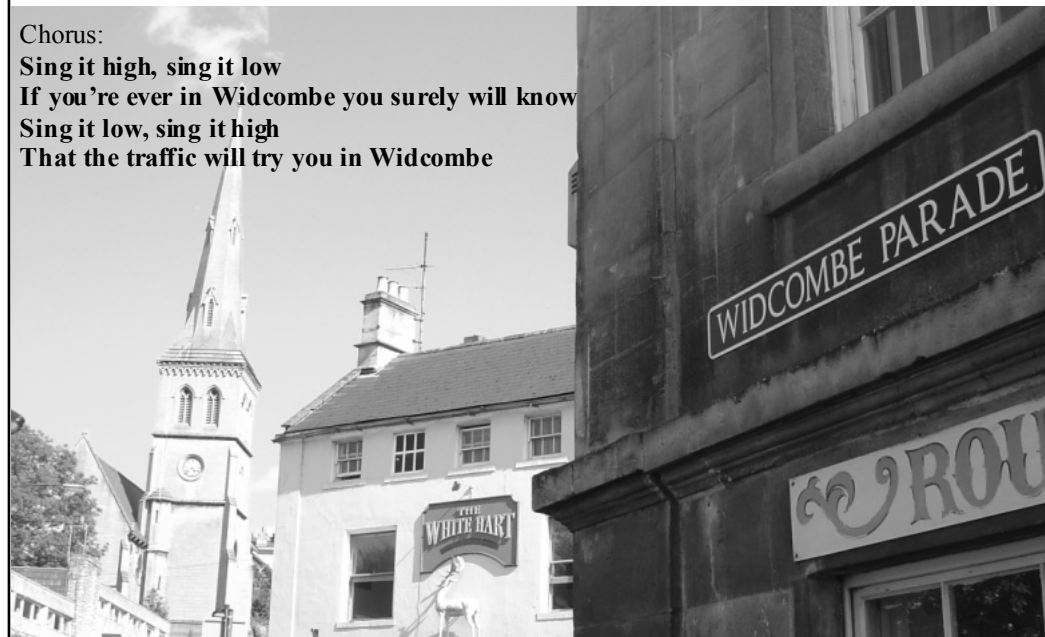
In Widcombe

©Deborah Sarjant

The lights they were shining on Widcombe Parade
A young man was waiting to meet his fair maid
Between the White Hart and the Kindling she said,
And the rush hour had started in Widcombe

Chorus:

Sing it high, sing it low
If you're ever in Widcombe you surely will know
Sing it low, sing it high
That the traffic will try you in Widcombe



This young man he knew that a maiden so sweet
Would never expect him to cross o'er that street
His mobile did ring but his signal was weak
And he barely could hear it in Widcombe

He looked in the Aga shop, searched all around
At the Curtain Exchange she was not to be found
And round about Round About no sight or sound,
So he stood on the pavement in Widcombe

Deborah Sarjant: vocals
Frankie Jackson: fiddle & vocals
Paddy Doyle: guitar & vocals

At last he did spy her just leaving The Ram
And he darted across with a wave of his hand
But a juggernaut ploughed him right down
as he ran
And he never did make it in Widcombe...

Song for Widcombe (We've Widcombe in our Bones)

© Sally Harris

We've Widcombe in our bones 'cos we're Widcombe born and bred
From the nails on our toes to the hairs on our head,
We're the best and the brightest that Bath has to boast
Say "Hurrah!" for the Mummers and join in our toast

Chorus

There's a railway and a waterway in our part of town
South of the river and north of Combe Down.

We've heard of King Bladud and seen all his pigs,
There's been Romans, and Georgians with their canes and their wigs,
And now there are Mummers to make us all laugh
So "Hurrah!" for the Mummers of Widcombe in Bath -

Chorus

There's a railway and a waterway in our part of town...
South of the river and north of Combe Down.

Dave Powell: vocals
Sally Harris: concertina
Nick Nicholls: melodeon
Amanda Dornan: guitar

Widcombe (Always In My Heart) © Laura James & John Diver

*Though I may travel far, across the sea or through the sky
My thoughts all stay in one place, where I can never say goodbye to...*

Chorus

Widcombe...
You're always in my heart
Widcombe...
Jewel of southern Bath
I would walk a thousand miles to just
return to
Widcombe
Always in my heart

Verse 2

After our walk we need refreshment
At the White Hart, The Ram or The Oak?
Watching all the folks go by smiling
Widcombe has such jolly folk

Verse 3

Lady Margaret & the Natural Theatre
What they'll do, you never can tell
And of course there's Widcombe Manor's
glamour
Full of all its royal scandal

Verse 1

Taking in the views from the Crescent
-pleasant
Prior Park's Palladian Bridge
Walking in the sunshine on the canal
(canal)
Watch the trains whiz by
Brunel's bridge

Laura James: Vocals
John Diver: Guitar
Roshan Wijetunge: Bass
Martyn James: Drums

The Widcombe Song (W-I-D-C-O-M-B-E) © Paul Goddard

There's some who sing of Scarborough, And some who sing of Rome
There's some who sing of London Town but Widcombe is my home
I've sailed across the Seven Seas And many wonders I have seen,
But of all the places I have been, There's none that can compare

They have taken me away from Widcombe, away from my River Avon
It's a long, long path to my home in Bath, But I shall return some day
Oh I must get back to Widcombe, Back where I long to be
(Spell it) W I D C O M B E, That's the place for me

- 2) I've been to many pleasant lands, I've seen the Rio Grande
Viewed the wonders of the World And trekked the desert sands
I've lost myself in jungles green And many places I have been
I cannot tell you all the rest But Widcombe is the best

They have taken me away from Widcombe, Away from my River Avon
It's a long, long path to my home in Bath, But I shall return some day
Oh I must get back to Widcombe, Back where I long to be
W I D C O M B E, That's the place for me

- 3) I've watched actors in famous plays and opera so grand
I've seen the Bolshoi ballet and I've heard some famous bands
Broadway musicals can't compare with Mummers' acting anywhere
And of all the Mummers everywhere, Widcombe's are the best

They have taken me away from Widcombe, Away from my River Avon
It's a long, long path to my home in Bath, But I shall return some day
Oh I must get back to Widcombe, Back where I long to be
(Spell it) W I D C O M B E, That's the place for me

- 4) King George and the Turkish Knight putting on quite a fight,
The old 'orse always comes along and puts it all to right.
When we're ill we get the quack, But sometimes he is out the back
Doing something in a sack, Oh what fun we 'ave

Oh I must get back to Widcombe, back where I long to be
W I D C O M B E, that's the place for me

- 5) In my mind I see scenes of the Avon and Kennet canal
I'm sitting in an hostelry sipping cider with a pal
I've touched the Pope and hugged the Queen and many people in between
But in all the places old and new I'm thinking just of you

Oh I must get back to Widcombe, Back where I long to be
W I D C O M B E, that's the place for I

Performed by Oggie and the Farmhands with The Severn Beach Buoys