

## 156 *Berlioz's 'Chant des Chemins de fer' heralds Tunnel opening*

ON FRIDAY 6 May 1994 the Opening of the Tunnel was heralded by the combined choirs of 90 choristers from the Ashford, Folkestone and Dover Choral Societies assisted by sixty singers from Le Choeur Regional du Nord Pas-de-Calais.

The first round, with Dvorak's *Te Deum* sung in Latin, ended with honours being even.

The second round, with Berlioz's *Chant des Chemins de fer* sung in French, gave an unfair advantage to the visitors from Douai and Lille, who having practised twice a week for many months sang with great precision and skill.

Finally victory was conceded to the French in the last round of Parry's *Blest pair of Sirens*. Despite the grit and determination of the Brits the French, singing in English, demonstrated the foreigners' usual skill in spoken English and swept on to a resounding victory. 'C'est votre victoire' was the honour awarded.

The invited audience of travel agents and business interests who hope to benefit from the Tunnel opening joined the singers in a magnificent feast and complimentary bar at the conclusion of the concert. The champagne from Portugal attracted special comment.

The Queen and President Mitterand were present on video.

A return match was held at Canterbury Cathedral on 9 October 1994. As the tunnel was still not open, the French could not field their full team and this engagement was a draw.

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## Membership News

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With inevitable annual losses taken into account, our total membership is now about twenty more than a year ago. We cannot be complacent and need to continue expanding our numbers if we are to remain a lively organisation. Our subscription is much lower than that of similar societies such as Deal and Faversham. Whilst the *Newsletter* can be a very effective means of introduction to potential members, please examine your conscience if you *regularly* pass on your copy to someone who could well join the Society.

Since July we have welcomed:- Mrs Sylvia Woolford, Mrs M. Southall, Mrs Mary King, Mrs B. J. Brightwell, Mrs G. Dobby, Mrs Noreen Thomas, Mr Keith Lawson and Mrs Audrey Lawson.

*New members are asked to state if they do not wish their names to be published as a form of welcome.*

**RAFFLES** held at Meetings contribute substantially towards the cost of hiring the hall. Prizes are always welcome and we are very grateful to members who provide them.