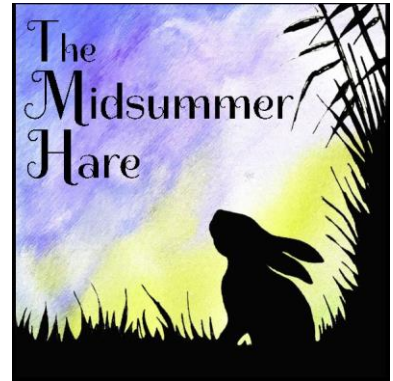


# THE MIDSUMMER HARE

## ANOTHER HIT FOR THE HEASER – CRESWELL TEAM

Anyone who missed the visit of *The Midsummer Hare* in June this year will have another chance to see this delightful musical fable in October. The performance in Wortham Church was pure nature at play, pure East Anglia and pure musical delight.

*The Midsummer Hare* is the story of a young hare's adventures as he explores the area around his home in Redgrave and Lopham Fen. The concept might remind some of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* or Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. However this local creation of the team who gave us *Cobbold's Tales* in 2002, had the advantage of an integrated narrative beautifully read by Mike Breen, a veteran of the Westacre Theatre Company.



In my opinion, this was Sue Heaser's finest work. *Cobbold's Tales* was an excellent portrayal of a man important in the history of Wortham and all these years later I still occasionally find myself humming one of Peter Creswell's catchy melodies. But in creating the book, Sue had the story of the Reverend Cobbold's life as a structure to build upon. There was no such framework for *The Midsummer Hare* and all of it came out of the head of this talented lady.

She also wrote the text for the excellent full colour printed programme included a detailed synopsis of the story and much information on the natural history of Redgrave and Lopham Fen and other places in our area. I for one learned a lot. Who knew, for example, that *Belle Eau* is the ancient name for the Little Ouse that flows from Redgrave Fen to the Wash? And who would have guessed that it gave its name to the village of Blo Norton?

The eight piece orchestra was led by the composer Peter Creswell at the piano who also created a lively score with different moods communicated by changes of tempo and some very clever orchestrations. The richness of the arrangement gave the impression that we were listening to a much larger orchestra. It must have been such a pleasant surprise for Max Sainsbury, the bassoon player, to be given the opportunity to represent the toads on the largest of the woodwind instruments. The bassoon is so often restricted to the creation of fill-sound in a large woodwind section.

The other instruments included clarinet, cello, flute, violin, double bass and percussion. The latter included a warbling bird song played by Sue Heaser in her percussion corner. "How on earth did you create those wonderful bird sounds?" Sue was asked at the end of the first performance. "With a ceramic water whistle ocarina," Sue replied.

Together these eight talented musicians executed Peter Creswell's wonderful score with nary a mistimed note in almost an hour. The main musical themes weaved in and out with some of the instruments representing the main characters. These included, in addition to the hare, a toad, barn owl, nightingale and water vole.

Peter Creswell played piano; Helen Morgan, clarinet; Max Sainsbury; bassoon, Catherine Johnson, cello; Nigel Morgan, flute; Cecilia Metherell, violin, Duncan Young, double bass and Sue Heaser, percussion. The premier performance has been captured on a high quality CD and orders may be placed on the website at [www.themidsummerhare.weebly.com](http://www.themidsummerhare.weebly.com)

I have a suggestion for Wortham School. When this wonderful local creation returns in October this year it would provide a wonderful opportunity for the children to be charmed by the story while learning about our treasured natural history and the sounds created by the instruments of the orchestra.

**Terry Quinn**