

Harris Quartet's skilled contrast of young and old

THE Harris Quartet began and ended their programme at Farnham Castle on February 26 with a piece specially composed for them by Adrian Brockless. He was present to enjoy the sensitive first performance of this charming piece, a gentle 'Berceuse' (cradle song) in a very English style with harmonies reminiscent of Vaughan Williams. The large audience enjoyed it so much they demanded a repeat at the end of the concert.

The two main works of the evening presented a fascinating contrast of youth and age: an early quartet by Mendelssohn and a late one by Beethoven. Mendelssohn's opus 12 reflects the former composer's acknowledged admiration for the latter but, overall, the style is unmistakably his own, ranging from romantic ardour to passages that recall skittish



moments from the *Midsummer Night's Dream* overture. The stormy finale demonstrated the mature virtuosic skills of the four young musicians, Nicky Olle, Nick Evans-Pughe, Helen Roche and Toby Turton.

It is almost incredible that Beethoven was completely deaf when he wrote

his astounding late quartets. Opus 130 in B flat is considered to be part of his crowning achievement as a composer and presents a great challenge to musicians. The Harris Quartet rose to this challenge admirably, giving a moving rendition of the soft 'Cavatina' and a contrastingly energetic Presto

to end a triumphant performance.

The next member's evening concert on March 26 will be a recital by Claire Jones, official harpist to the Prince of Wales. For more information contact the TBS secretary on 01428 713338 or visit www.tilbach.org.uk
Rosemary Wisbey

Support expression of ideas in the arts

Sir, Art plays more important roles in human life than Antonia Senior allows ("The fat lady must learn to be a little thinner", Opinion, April 2). Art can express forms of thinking and understanding in ways that are beyond the scope of ordinary language. In all aspects of life there are ideas that are more or less difficult to grasp; it is the same with art, which is why different forms enjoy greater or lesser amounts of attention.

Nonetheless, whether the artists be Banksy or Vaughan Williams, their art contributes to the life of a culture and allows us to express opinions from a vantage point nourished by our grasp of an idea and the artist's treatment of it. If we allow some forms of art to "go to the wall" then we estrange ourselves from forms of thought and understanding expressed by that art. A culture in which, for instance, classical music has dropped away will have lost its ability to make of joy, death, tragedy and love what it does in a way that only classical music can. Other forms of music can treat joy, death and love but they cannot make of it what classical music does, simply because they are not classical music.

So it is an obligation of a progressive culture to ensure that all forms of thinking and understanding are kept alive. That obligation should extend to funding minority dimensions of our culture to ensure high standards are maintained. Allowing such dimensions to "go to the wall" is tantamount to saying that we should not be unduly concerned about deepening our understanding in ways that do not immediately have financial impact.

ADRIAN BROCKLESS
London W8

Take part in bird survey

TOMORROW, Saturday, October 30, is the Big Bordon Bird Watch Day, when the Deadwater Valley Trust will be asking residents to spend a short time recording birds in their gardens, in woods or on commons.

The trust's new ranger Adrian Brockless is asking people to record the highest number of each bird species they see in a 20-minute period and put the figure in the box, below a picture of the appropriate species on the recording sheet.

Mr Brockless said: "You can get the recording sheet by downloading it from the trust's website www.deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk and e-mail it back to us.

"Most important of all, please enjoy it, and feel free to practise before Saturday.

"We will collate all the results and publish them as soon as we can."

Autumn Fascinates Countryside Ranger

Deadwater Valley Trust countryside ranger Adrian Brockless enjoys autumn.

He said: "It's all change for wildlife. Autumn is a time of great beauty and wonder in the natural world.

"The changing colours of plants and trees, combined with early morning mist, are always special and thoughts turn to picking blackberries and ripened apples.

"For me however, it is always a time tinged with sadness. The fre-

netic, urgent days of the breeding season are over.

"Much of the wildlife is preparing for hibernation and the swallows and martins - those iconic birds of summer - are beginning their epic migrations to Africa.

"Those little birds which nest in barns and under the eaves of our houses fly all the way from the UK to spend the winter thousands of

miles away in the southern hemisphere, where it is of course summer.

"Yet my sadness is always tempered by the anticipation of winter arrivals.

"Species such as fieldfare and redwing are preparing to leave their own breeding grounds in Scandinavia and journey across the North Sea to spend winter in Britain feeding on the berries of hawthorn and rowan.

"And the winter also provides great opportu-

nities to observe those mammals that can no longer hide in the summer vegetation, such as badgers.

"Take a visit to any rural location at this time and you're sure to see various kinds of fungi.

"Over 4,000 kinds of fungus have been recorded in Britain - these include toadstools, mushrooms, puffballs and clubs.

"A brightly coloured toadstool that you are likely to encounter is the Fly Agaric, with its

bright red cap dotted with white spots.

"This species, like so many other kinds of fungus, is highly poisonous, so it is inadvisable to try any unless you are in the company of an expert."

October 30 sees the launch of the Big Bordon Birdwatch.

This is the first year it will have been run and the aim is to gain data about birds in the town.

To take part visit www.deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk.

Chance to join in the Big Bordon Birdwatch

by **Mary Bishop**
mary.bishop@thepost.co.uk

SATURDAY, October 30, sees the launch of the first-ever Big Bordon Bird Watch.

It's being launched by the new Deadwater Valley Trust countryside ranger, Adrian Brockless, who stepped into his new post at the beginning of September.

People in the Bordon and Whitehill area are being asked to take part by Adrian and the aim is to gather data about birds in the town.

He said: "One thing about wildlife is that it often never does what you expect it to do.

"In most years, the end of September sees cooler weather and the departure for Africa of most of our house martins and swallows. This year, however, the relatively mild and wet conditions of recent weeks have allowed the birds to remain a week or two longer than normal."

Adrian said jays - which are members of the crow family - are also a common sight at the moment and autumn is the best time to see them, as they are drawn from cover by the glut of acorns - a favourite food. Al-

exandra Park and the area around Knoxes' Pond (off Conde Way) are particularly good places to spot these colourful birds.

Adrian explained: "There is an interesting symbiosis between the jay and the oak tree. Jays, rather like squirrels, will eat some acorns and bury the rest of what they collect for future consumption.

"Fortunately - for the oak tree - they are blessed with poor memories and tend to forget where they have buried their food. The buried acorn is then able to germinate, producing a new oak sapling and the jays benefit from the extra food supply the trees produce every autumn."

Many of the area in Whitehill and Bordon are Special Protected Areas (SPAs) because of ground nesting birds like nightjars, Dartford warblers and woodlarks.

The warblers, he said, had taken "a particularly hard hit" due to the harsh winter. Adrian has taken up his post after moving from the Na-

tional Trust in Seahouses, Northumberland, where he spent three months in a tent monitoring Little Terns. He has also been involved with the RSPB's Farnham Heath Restoration Project.

To become involved in the Big Bordon Bird Watch, simply go into your garden or go somewhere local where you might see a good number of bird species (Adrian recommends Alexandra Park or Knox's Pond, and says the morning is the best time to observe). Record the highest number of each bird species you see in a 20-minute period and put the figure in the space below the appropriate species on the recording sheet below.

Cut out the recording sheet and send it to: Deadwater Valley Trust, Phoenix Arts Centre, Station Road, Bordon GU35 0LR.

The results will be collated and published in the Post

Adrian said: "I would urge everyone who can, to take part in this scientific survey."



Deadwater Valley Trust ranger Adrian Brockless, ready for the Big Bordon Birdwatch.

See www.deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk for more details.

