



In Harmony

The Marchington Singers' Newsletter

Number 22

August 2008

Hello, Singers and Friends!

And so a new season dawns! Our twenty fifth year as The Marchington Singers - and common decency will preclude my listing the several more mature choristers who have been members as boy sopranos or youthful altos since those early days! (But we're all full of admiration for their lengthy contributions to our choir). So there's my cues as I thrash around searching for a meaningful first contribution to our in-house publication.

Farewell!

As a season closes, we bid farewell and offer our sincere thanks to those who have retired from office. Each member of our active committee is expected to take on an area of responsibility and it is proper to applaud the unflagging work that David and Pat have contributed in recent years in fulfilling their roles.

Our Chairman was always prepared to undertake the most mundane of jobs - be it testing light bulbs to find the best buy or distributing leaflets - as well as leading in developing our strategic plans (yes, we do have some!).

For Pat any task within her compass was a challenge to be overcome - from uniforms to annual dinner arrangements, from Singers' badges to counting bodies onto buses! We are indebted to them as they recuperate with an injection of time into their pressed social and caravanning lives. David writes:-

Dear Singers,

I was both surprised and delighted at the AGM to receive your most generous gift to mark my standing down from the Chairmanship of the Singers. I'm sure we don't deserve it, but the lavender and tokens will brighten the garden for both Pat and I in the months and years ahead, while the bottle of one of my favourite wines will be put to good use on some special occasion!

Our best wishes to you all. We look forward to seeing you again next term.

David Warhurst

Secretarial Duties

Gill also seeks respite from her lengthy service as Singers' Secretary. We are trying to lighten her load but, in all fairness and respect for her tremendous efforts on our behalf, we do need to replace her as she struggles with a range of local and family responsibilities (and Mike!). We do owe it to her - as to any postholder - to respect her wishes in recognition of her committed efficiency over the years. Any volunteers out there? (even if only to take effect from September, 2009).

Many Thanks

Whilst genuinely offering our sincere thanks to committee members past, may I also express thanks to all our serving committee members. Concerts, with attendant programme creation, advertising, ticket sales, refreshments, venue selection and booking and securing of supporting artistes, tours, with the reservation of flights and accommodation, bus hiring, concert arrangement, feeding

Diary

2008

Saturday August 30th
Wedding at Hoar Cross
Church, 1.00 p.m.
(Rehearsal Aug. 27th 7.30)

Wednesday September
3rd - 7.30 p.m.
Autumn term starts

Saturday October 4th
Draycott Harvest
Celebration
Draycott-in-the-Clay
Village Hall, 7.30 p.m.

Tuesday December 2nd
Christmas Concert at
Staffordshire Showground,
Stafford. Time TBC.

Saturday December 13th
Christmas by Candlelight
Concert at St. Mary's
Church Uttoxeter. 7.30 p.m.

2009

Wednesday January 7th
New Term begins (TBC)

Saturday April 25th
Joint Concert with Moira
Male Voice Choir.
Burton Town Hall TBC.

Saturday 11th July

and social arrangements, the provision of our music, weddings... all demand much thought, time and energy.

Add to these, links with schools, the maintenance of contacts with our Friends publicity, membership issues, workshops, the website and the Choir Network which also necessitate much positive commitment and we begin to appreciate the efforts demanded of our representatives.

Yet all these elements are the keys to our continuing success. It is **OUR CHOIR** not just that of the Committee, so we are all so grateful that some members are ready to give so generously of their time to match the invariable commitment of our membership at large who also invariably seem to be prepared to offer support when it is sought.

Accordingly, may I bracket all other serving members of our committee with those who are leaving; it is so easy for their efforts to be taken for granted. We really do appreciate the unflagging endeavours of Wendy, who must live and breathe our choir, constantly reviewing and planning our work and still facing the music(!) - or our attempts to grapple with it! - every Wednesday; of Rhoda whose massive tolerance supports her enviable keyboard skills ("You give it me, I'll play it" seems to be her philosophy); of 'Spreadsheet Tim' (whose meticulous attention to financial detail and matters organisational are outstanding) and of 'Ian the Library' and 'Simon IT'. All give us so much and enable us to reach the high standards so readily and regularly appreciated by our audiences and clients this year.

And Finally (well nearly)

A Welshman with a captive audience really does go on ...but I promise that this will be the last time I do so and believe that these things needed recording. May I thank you all for your continuing endeavours through the year and for your confidence in making my appointment as Chair; it is indeed a much appreciated honour. But I am also well aware that the confidence is perhaps limited in an uncontested race and with no manifesto advanced! Indeed I thought that washing the glasses after our Summer Concert would get me off the hook! Perhaps such domestic achievement is the qualification for the job and I didn't appreciate that! No wonder our ladies took over the role typically without any request at the AGM.

Whatever, I do treasure an appointment which may enable me to attempt to give something back to a body which has given me so much challenge, much enjoyment and so much camaraderie since one of my fellow Welsh missionaries was foolish enough to suggest to Tim that I was Welsh; thus I could sing; thus I could fill a tenor gap (I so far disproved her analysis that Tim soon defected to more bass elements!).

Our Conductor is of course our real leader and driving force, but I undertake to give her my full support in trying to ensure that the enjoyment we so regularly derive from quality rehearsal and performance and friendly social exercise is preserved.

Annual General Meeting - 12 July 2008

What an excellent session this was – and *so* different from the usual Trial by AGM exercises many of us face in other organizations. A good turnout (even though Bryan forecast that the wine would be foul!) led to thoughtful consideration and discussion of choir members' suggestions which the Committee must now take on board.

Your Committee

The following officers and committee members were elected, at the AGM on 16th July 2008, to serve for the year to the end of the 2009 A.G.M.

Chairman

Peter Davies (01283 712582)
peter@petmar7.co.uk

Secretary

Gill Williamson (01283 820407)
williamson@marchington92.freeserve.co.uk

Treasurer

Tim Scott (01889 563570)
tim@raggedrobin.co.uk

Music Librarian

Ian Jones (01283 820581)
ian.jones32@virgin.net

Committee Members

Simon Barber (01889 594291)
sibarber_2005@yahoo.co.uk

Maggie Hatchard (01283 820207)
maggiehatchard@aol.com

Sheila Templier (01283 840688)
stemplier@ukonline.co.uk

The Conductor and Accompanist are automatically members of the committee.

Conductor

Wendy Scott (01889 563570)
wendy@raggedrobin.co.uk

Accompanist

Rhoda Castle (01283 820486)
castletom@btinternet.com

Notes

... put concert dates in diary ...

** Rehearsal for Hoar Cross*

*Wedding Wed. 27th Aug. 7.30 p.m.
at the Village Hall.*

** Full rehearsals start Wed. 3rd
Sept. 7.30 p.m. At the Village Hall.*

** Subscriptions due in September.
£25 for the year or £8.50 per term.*

How healthy it is that such open discussion and measured challenge can be voiced without embarrassment being caused or offence being taken. And how indicative is such debate of the spirit of belonging and ownership that our members enjoy in relation to The Marchington Singers. Suggestions raised included :

- by holding small group practices outside the Wednesday night full Singers' slot.
- time-limit key Committee role - as well as that of Chairman - (at present 3 years)
- review our imbalance situation by closing membership to new soprano applicants at this stage and to seek possible soprano-to-alto transfers by existing members
- find a substitute for our sing anywhere 'Kymbayah' - just when I'd learned the words!
- staging classes for music understanding – of the nuts and bolts of our music – for those of us who do not find music reading easy
- the need for ALL of us to do our homework between Wednesday sessions – to learn words and to become more familiar with the music we are learning
- a review of the start (and end) time of rehearsals - see enclosed reply form.

These items will all be raised in this term's committee meetings and, in addition to Gill's display of the minutes of these meetings on our noticeboard, I shall, very briefly, I promise, bring a report back of our main decisions at our Wednesday evening break.

Friends of The Marchington Singers

A list of names? A list of potential ticket sales? A list of possible helpers? We are so hugely indebted to our

Conductor's Notes

Well here I am thinking about Christmas already! But before we plunge into holly and mistletoe and stuff, I'd just like to briefly reiterate what David and now Peter, as our new Chairman, have said. *We're a team*. And what a great team to be in (yes, I'm one of the old-stagers that Peter is reluctant to name . . .). Everyone does their bit willingly and cheerfully and that makes a big difference to the 'feel' of the choir. In some amazing way, I'm sure this contributes to the standard of our singing, and we've achieved a lot this year. Thank you, everyone.

Peering into the future - as we said at the AGM - it's looking busy! You can see from the dates listed on this Newsletter that we are pretty booked up in the immediate future, and we've even made a stab at the date of next year's Anniversary Concert! So this is just what's planned

Friends for their ongoing support (176 tickets were sold for our Summer Concert, only 14 of these at the door) and to a small group for their readiness to roll up their sleeves to dispense wine, wash up or distribute programmes at our concerts. To Julian Blakemore, Charles Crowe, Stuart Miller, David Shaw and Peter Speed we are most grateful for allowing us to concentrate on the stage side of events at our public concerts. To Stuart too we would express our appreciation of his work in managing our website in past years. We are very sorry to lose his services.

But the Friends of Marchington Singers do mean more to us than a meal ticket! In some imperceptible way, they do provide us with a boost to morale, an evidence of an interest in what we do – yes, and our best source of marketing! Accordingly (subject to confirmation by our Singers' committee), we intend to circulate our bi-annual In Harmony Newsletter to our supporters in an effort to keep them abreast of what we are doing.

Similarly, in an endeavour to make our presence even more meaningful to our Friends we would extend to them a warm welcome to call in unannounced to one of our rehearsals in the Village Hall on Wednesdays.

In conclusion

The next years promise to be very full ones for our Choir. Indeed, the number of invitations to perform, which we have of course welcomed, has increased to such an extent that not only are we performing more but we are also having to regretfully turn down some requests.

May I wish all members well in these ventures, solicit their continuing conscientious involvement and, above all, express the sincere hope that we all continue TO ENJOY the experience of singing with The Marchington Singers.

Peter Davies.

- who knows what fabulous offers we may have that are really too good to turn down!

I know you don't want to think about this as the sun is beating down upon your barbecued steaks (actually at this moment it's pouring), but could you please bring to the first rehearsal on September 3rd Carols for Choirs Books I and II (Green and Orange books - if you don't have copies of these then Ian has a few for you to purchase). Also: Pianola Play, Star Carol, Stille Nacht, Very Best Time of Year and White Christmas - to be going on with. I've got a new one up my sleeve (there's a surprise): Walking in the Air (The Snowman theme) and a couple more . . . as usual I'll be confirming the programme for the Candlelight and for the Draycott Harvest Concert with the committee.

Just a reminder that there is a rehearsal on Wednesday 27th August for those who are singing at the Wedding on the 30th. I do have confirmation of the hymns (all unison) and will have copies at the rehearsal.

Have a great summer - see you in September.

Wendy

Money Matters

This is a brief resumé for those members who were unable to make the AGM in July.

In the year up to 30th April 2008, income was £4,673 and expenditure £4,604. Our accumulated fund (what we have in the bank and petty cash) stood at £2,247. This is the second year running that we have just broken even, which shows how long it has taken to build up our reserves. I would not like to see this figure dip below £1,500.

So how was the income spent? Our subscriptions (£1,054) paid for the hire of the Village Hall and our annual insurance. The net income (after deducting expenses) from concerts and weddings of £1,337 paid for the cost of buying music (£938), the cost of printing/stationery/supplies (£198) and various sundries items (£163). The income and expenditure for the dinner and uniform sales (making up the total figures above) just about balance each other.

This flow of money proves that we are an active organisation. We are not a 'for profit' organisation and so it is right that we should use our income in this way. However, (and I guess you'd expect the Treasurer to express cau-

tion) we will be staging a major event, in July 2009, to celebrate our 25th Anniversary - provisionally Saturday 11th July. Without divulging any secrets, you can be assured that Wendy is planning something special - and this could need a substantial amount of money to put on. We should therefore anticipate the need for one or two fund raising events early in 2009. In the past, quiz nights, wine and cheese evenings and 'Singathons' have raised substantial amounts. So if anyone is willing to organise any of these, or other innovative 'nice little earners' please talk to any Committee member.

The total of the bank accounts and petty cash has fallen to £1,870, which gives me the perfect opportunity to remind all members that **your subscriptions for 2008/9 are due at the beginning of the new term** starting in September! The subs (which haven't been increased for over three years) are **£25/year or £8.50/term**. Please bring your cash or cheque book to the rehearsal on September 3rd.

'Spreadsheet' Tim