

The Choral Chronicle



Summer 2015

From The Chairman

Ben Cooper (B)

Well, our long Summer Break is almost at an end. The Three Choirs Festival in Hereford was once again a huge success, and I know that I, and all the Worcester contingent had a great week. The sun even came out a couple of times!

Back in July, I hosted the first Summer Party for members of the chorus. The rain stopped just as the first people arrived, and then the sun shone. It was a wonderful afternoon, and for many of us a first chance to actually chat to people we only knew from afar or as a name on a list, and also an opportunity to meet spouses, partners and some of their children. It will be happening again next year, hopefully our numbers will swell beyond the 52 that came!

Following the arrival of our new website WFCS is now fully entering the 21st Century with online ticket sales. The new system has opened us up to a wider audience already. The first two tickets sold were to a couple from Devon, only hours after going live! I would like to take this opportunity to thank Judy Jenkins (A) for all her hard work in setting this up, and more importantly to her husband Andrew who spent hours researching and testing systems.

This year we are also having a Grand Raffle! Virginia Webb (S) had the brain child, and has been working throughout the summer amassing some wonderful prizes, and arranging ticket printing etc. along with Michelle Whitefoot (S) (Full details will be announced separately.) The idea of the raffle is for us as members to sell the tickets to our friends, family or work colleagues, rather than relying on our own pockets, we are hoping to raise £3,000 for the chorus, which would certainly save David Norledge from feeling he has to raise our subscriptions!

HELP!!!! As many of you know, Stephen Philipson (B) has retired from organising the advertising in our programmes. So please do consider helping us on this score, it is not an onerous task, and does not involve attending any committee meetings! Also, Peter Thomas (B) has for a number of years been producing and designing our posters and programmes, but has had to give up due to greater involvement with the Malvern Concert Club. So is there anyone who would like to take up this task, again you wouldn't have to attend and be a full member of the committee!! Please do let myself or Michelle Whitefoot (S) know if you can help.

Also Patrons... Do you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a Patron of the WFCS for the coming season? This is a great way of supporting our Choral Society and being recognised for it as well! Please see the details in our season's brochure or contact our Patron's Secretary, Anne Renshaw (S), for more details.

Finally, following mentioning all the hard work Andrew Jenkins has put in to helping create our online ticket sales, I would just like to thank all spouses, partners and families of the committee and members. In the committee I know that many rely on 'running things by their other half' before bringing things to meetings, or asking for a helping hand with stuffing envelopes etc. And of course personal family time is given over to meetings, rehearsals etc. So, here is a big thank you to all 'other halves' and families who support us all in our music making and keeping WFCS such a pleasure to be a part of.

WFCS Dates for your Diary 2015 / 16

2015

- First Rehearsal of Autumn Term: Monday 7 September
- Half Term Break: Monday 26 October
- Autumn Concert: Saturday 14 November: Elgar "The Music Makers", and Stanford.
- Messiah: Saturday 12 December

2016

- First Rehearsal of Spring Term: TBA
- Half Term Break: TBA
- Spring Concert 2016: Saturday 12 March 2016: Dvorak, Borodin, and, as the Centenary of the Somme on 1 July approaches, Vaughan Williams "Dona Nobis Pacem".

Online Ticket Sales

The Society's reach is very considerably enhanced by the introduction of Online Ticket Sales. This system is now in operation. Judy Jenkins (A), who organises the ticket selling operation, says: "From the WFCS website anyone can choose their seats for all of our concerts. I will retain a limited supply of seats to sell to the chorus for this season but we intend to encourage everyone to use the new system eventually".

This development is a welcome opportunity to remind ourselves that making great music requires making great ticket sales. And how much WFCS owes to Judy for facilitating this.

Gift Aid

Making great music also requires a great Treasurer. We very fortunately have one in David Norledge (T). David circulated the following note about Gift Aid towards the end of our last season (approaching the end of the financial year) which we believe bears repetition here:

"Speaking of the end of the season, it'll soon be time for me to submit the Society's annual Gift Aid reclaim on your subscriptions to H.M.Revenue and Customs. This is an extremely important part of the Society's income totalling well over £3,000 and so I like to maximise it".

David then referred to the relevant form, which you can obtain from him by email at dnorledge@moog.com or by post to David Norledge, 8 Leicester Street, Worcester WR1 3HU. He added that it is not necessary for anyone who has completed this form for WFCS in the past to complete it again, but anyone in the following categories is encouraged to do so:

1. If you are a new member joining this year who is also a UK taxpayer and haven't already completed a form for me
2. If you are an existing member who has become a UK taxpayer for the first time since 6 April 2014
3. If you aren't quite certain whether you've completed one or not.

Conversely, if you have previously completed a form, but have since ceased to be a tax payer he needs to know that as he can't now claim the tax back on your sub.

Grand Raffle

Lesley Bellerby (A), General Secretary and a Trustee of WFCS, introduces the Grand Raffle, another significant initiative with a view to strengthening the Society's finances without in any way taking away from the successful weekly raffle and the hard work which goes into that success:

"As outlined to you at the last AGM the finances of the Society are currently in a healthy state with a reasonable amount of reserves under our belt. This has been achieved for the most part by a process of good housekeeping and making sure we live within our income.

However, general costs and artistes' fees are constantly increasing and if we are to maintain our current high standards and ensure our continuing presence on the musical scene of Worcestershire then we need to be certain that we can maintain our reserves by generating extra income.

To meet this requirement your Trustees have agreed that we should organise a Grand Raffle which we are hoping could raise as much as £3,000. This will be run throughout the 2015/2016 Season with the draw taking place immediately before our last concert in March 2016. Prizes will be very attractive with a value of not less than £100 and we are hoping to be able to sell tickets not only to members of the chorus but to the public at large. Full details will be available shortly.

To this end we are asking everyone in the chorus to participate by taking responsibility for selling at least two books of raffle tickets at £10 each. I am sure you will agree that this is not much to ask in support of those who have so generously donated the prizes.

We need your help to ensure we are successful. Please do whatever you can to contribute."

Forthcoming Events

The Editors hope it is helpful to repeat in summary form the notices of two forthcoming Come and Sing Events circulated to members during the summer:

- Saturday 19 September: A 1-day choral workshop to be held in the Alice Ottley Hall the Royal Grammar School, Worcester, sponsored by the Elgar Chorale, and led by Piers Maxim. The work to be covered is Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*.
More information: www.elgarchorale.com
- Saturday 24 October: Come and Sing with John Rutter: 10.45 – 16.45 at College Hall, Worcester Cathedral, arranged by the Friends of Worcester Three Choirs Festival. John Rutter invites you to sing a mixture of choral music old and new, familiar and unfamiliar, with some of his own works included and a few surprises. £20 per singer, including tea and coffee (£2.50 booking fee per transaction). Music will be provided.
More information: www.3choirs.org.

Ian Bell RIP

As our Chairman informed members soon after the sad event, Ian Bell died during the night of 19 April 2015. Ian was a Bass Lay Clerk of the Cathedral. At his funeral in the Cathedral on 21 May the Dean spoke of Ian living the life of a Lay Clerk in an exemplary manner. He was well known personally to many members of WFCS. He was known to all who sang at the Cathedral Christmas Concert last December for his moving hummed introduction to *Stille Nacht* on that occasion. He had sung with many members of WFCS at Three Choir Festivals over many years. Away from Cathedral music, many of us had come to enjoy his music making with Chapter 8. His ashes were interred in the Cloister after Evensong on 17 July in a place near the door to the Cloister Garden between the Song School and the Church. The Lay Clerks' room in the refurbished Song School has been named the Ian Bell Room.

Cadenza

Our Librarians:

Our first Cadenza feature in this Issue celebrates the work of our Librarians. This essential function in any Choral Society has been performed with distinction in WFCS in recent years by a line of members, at present Jenny Brumhead (A). Jenny succeeded Joan Willis in 2013. Joan sang with WFCS as an Alto. Joan succeeded Ruth Reeves (A) in 1998. Ruth succeeded John Bleney (B) in 1990.

Ruth recalls that the responsibility of the work extended then to Three Choirs. The music was kept in uncongenial conditions in what were then dirty, damp cellars under College House, which is now the smart Guesten. There was a huge amount of music, much being from Three Choirs, in varying condition and kept in large cardboard boxes. WFCS often loaned to other societies. Ruth adds that the memory which she most often quotes, and now (but evidently not then!) laughs about was when she phoned someone to ask if she could return her copies and was asked when the concert will be taking place. It had been the previous night!

That feature of the Librarian's work which involves chasing scores (now that wouldn't be from any of us, would it?!) echoes the tribute which our immediate past Chairman Mark Elliston (B) paid to our Librarians in the Choral Chronicle, Summer 2013, when Joan Willis stepped down:

"it's not only a demanding job sourcing our scores from all over the country, but involves getting them all back again (chasing some errant members as well!). Tidying them up, and returning them is quite a job in itself".

Jenny Brumhead has a background in professional Librarianship. We are fortunate in WFCS to be supported by our distinguished, knowledgeable and resourceful succession of Librarians.

Peter Nardone's Talk at the Elgar birthplace Museum on Saturday 9 May 2015:

On Saturday 9 May Peter gave a Talk at the Elgar Birthplace Museum on "Elgar's Church Music – A Performer's Perspective". Your Editors were among a group of WFCS members who had picked up notice of the talk which Sally Rees (S), our membership and website Secretary, had kindly circulated. This was a brilliant afternoon, which Peter sparkingly illustrated at the piano, redolent with his trademark engaging mix of information and good humour. Do not miss an opportunity to hear Peter deliver any similar programme in the future!

The afternoon was arranged by the thriving West Midlands Branch of the Elgar Society: www.elgar.org The Birthplace website is always worth following: www.elgarmuseum.org

Hereford Three Choirs Festival 2015:

Hereford Three Choirs was a triumph in the Festival's Tercentenary year. At the Opening Service Lord Williams (former Archbishop Rowan Williams) spoke about the relationship of art, imagination, music and faith, and about the need for the routine of daily life to be interrupted by the transformative experience of art and music.

That set, or anticipated, the tone of a Festival in which the Hereford Times reported a "stunning" performance of the St Matthew Passion by the three Cathedral Choirs under Geraint Bowen, Director of Music at Hereford Cathedral and Director of its home Festival. The BBC recorded for future broadcast what may prove to be a definitive performance of this work.

The Festival Chorus performed magnificently through the week, giving effect to their lengthy rehearsal schedule and their commitment to the intensity of the Festival programme. They sang the Opening Service and the Opening Concert (Gerontius), each under Geraint Bowen, on the Saturday, the Bliss Morning Heroes on the Monday, the Missa Solemnis under Adrian Partington on the Wednesday, the Nielsen Hymnus Amoris and the Mathias Lux Aeterna under Peter Nardone on the Thursday, and the Verdi Requiem under Geraint Bowen on the Friday. Reviews can be read at www.3choirs.org and www.herefordtimes.com

Gloucester Three Choirs Festival 2016: Saturday 23 July to Saturday 30 July:

The outline programme is published and will soon be posted at www.3choirs.org Highlights promise to include The Kingdom on Saturday 23 July, Elijah, with Sir Willard White, on Monday 25 July, the Vaughan Williams Dona Nobis Pacem on Tuesday 26 July (we are singing this in our Spring Concert on 12 March), the Berlioz Grande Messe des Morts on Wednesday 27 July, and the Mahler Symphony No. 8 (Symphony of a Thousand) on Saturday 30 July.

WFCS Summer Party at the Chairman's home on Sunday 12 July:

A large group of members and guests enjoyed a splendid Summer Party at Ben's home on Sunday 12 July. Huge thanks to Ben, his mother, and our Social Secretary Sue White. WFCS is indeed a Choral Society in good heart, and good appetite, as well as good voice!

Worcester Festival Choral Society Committee Contacts

Chairman	Ben Cooper (B)	07961 371961	b.cooper@lineone.net
General Secretary	Lesley Bellerby (A)	01562 820409	bellerbylp9@btinternet.com
Treasurer	David Norledge (T)	07930 982752	dnorledge@moog.com
Membership and Website	Sally Rees (S)	01684 564721	rees.sallyjane@gmail.com
Tickets Secretary	Judy Jenkins (A)	01905 354533	jjjenkins@btinternet.com
Librarian	Jenny Brumhead (A)	01905 763299	jnbrumhead@tiscali.co.uk
Patrons Secretary	Anne Renshaw (S)	01905 351736	annerenshaw@me.com
Social Secretary	Sue White (A)	07970 597229	susan.white36@btinternet.com
Marketing & Publicity	Michelle Whitefoot	01886 812107	michelle@whitefootpr.co.uk
Choral Chronicle Editors	Toby & Anna Hooper		hooper.anna@btopenworld.com