

KENDAL SOUTH CHOIR

Newsletter 9 – September 2014

Ian's report

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who has been involved with the Choir this last season. It has been a busier than normal season, with participation in four concerts instead of our usual two, and an enormous amount of voluntary work has gone on behind the scenes, which deserves to be recognised.

Negotiations for the two 'extramural' concerts, i.e. Vaughan Williams with the Westmorland Orchestra and the Verdi Requiem at Carlisle had begun at least 12 months before the events and resulted in hugely successful concerts. From a conductor's point of view they could not have been more different, although the choral contribution to both was nothing less than superb. The obvious difference was the orchestras, which is not a subject to expound on in this report. Chorally the VW was a joy; we had adequate time to learn the work thoroughly, so that full attention could be given to performing the music - so much more than just singing the right notes in the right place!

The Verdi Requiem (for me fulfilling a lifelong ambition), I hope was a great experience for all who took part; it was one of those rare occasions when everything works perfectly on the day. Although we had three all-day choral rehearsals (which I tried to make enjoyable and not too exhausting), I had no previous rehearsal with either soloists or orchestra and everything fitted together like a well-oiled machine. I must give credit to the superb leader, Bradley Creswick, who was an enormous help.

So to our main season, about which I have already written in some detail in the Newsletters. Two contrasted programmes, each with its own challenge, both achieved a high standard in performance and attracted

some enthusiastic appreciation of our work. Each section of the choir acquitted itself with considerable distinction and I remain grateful for the energy and enthusiasm with which the membership responds to my direction. For my part, I do hit the buffers from time to time and the difficulty of maintaining the necessary energy levels is the principal reason for my reluctant decision to step down at the end of the 2014-2015 season. However I am confident of handing over to Hugh (who continues to be an enormous pleasure to work with) a choir in good heart and wish him a fruitful and enjoyable time at the helm.

Happy singing.

Ian Thompson
September 2014

Annual General Meeting

At the AGM on 7th October Liz Wragg, Pippa Hall and David Thomas were elected to the Committee.

The Committee for 2014/2015 is now as follows:

Chairman: Dorothy Davies
Treasurer: Stewart Fuller
Secretary: Anne-Marie Quinn

Wendy Corrie
Pippa Hall
Arthur Robinson
Jean Robinson
David Thomas
Liz Wragg

together with
Ian Thompson – Director of Music
Hugh Davies – Director of Music elect
Moira Greenhalgh – Minutes Secretary

Future Concerts

A list of diary dates accompanies this newsletter, but the main points are as follows:

Our own concerts

Our performance of *Messiah* will be on **Saturday 13th December**, in St Thomas's Church, Kendal. We will be singing from the Watkins Shaw edition. There are still some copies available to hire. If *Messiah* is new to you, you can learn your part at www.cyberbass.org – look for *Messiah* under Major Works.

Please note: This concert was originally scheduled for 6th December but has had to be changed to 13th December.

Posters and flyers will be available shortly and should be distributed widely. Please think where you can display them in the area where you live and sign up on the list next to the posters at rehearsal.

Our own first concert of 2015 will be on **Saturday 25th April** at St Thomas's Church, Kendal, with soloists Emily Robinson and Fiona Weakley (sopranos) and Alex Banfield (tenor). We will sing Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* and *Toward the Unknown Region* by Vaughan Williams – which we sang with the Westmorland Orchestra in December 2013 – together with opera choruses, and there will be items from the soloists.

Future concerts are planned for the following dates:

Saturday 14th November 2015
Saturday 23rd January 2016
Saturday 7th May 2016

Please make rehearsals your priority for Tuesday evenings and attend as many as you possibly can. If you are unable to attend for any reason, let your Section Rep (see below) know, or, if you know in advance, mark the register with an "A" for that date.

For security reasons the Union Street door at Stricklandgate Methodist Church has to be locked at 7.30pm, so if you know you are going to be late please arrange to text a friend in the choir when you arrive.

Other Events

Saturday 8th November, 7.30pm

The CCI Chorus and Orchestra with soloists and Amabile Girls' Choir, conducted by Ian Jones, perform Britten's *War Requiem* in Kendal Parish Church. To be preceded by the Last Post. Tickets price £14 (under-18s free) available from Made in Cumbria, Stramontgate, Kendal, from chorus members or at the door.

Wednesday 31st December (New Year's Eve), 11pm

The CCI Chorus and soloists sing Haydn's *Paukenmesse* (Mass in Time of War) in St Martin's Church, Bowness-on-Windermere, in aid of Help for Heroes. Application forms to sing in the chorus will be available soon – rehearsal from 7.00-9.45pm to be followed by a communal supper.

There are plans for CCI to perform all six of Haydn's late Masses (numbers 9-14) over a two-year period, all as "come and sing" events.

www.cumbriachoralinitiative.org

Mary Wakefield Festival 2015

Adjudicated Classes 16th-19th March

It would be good if we were able to enter a group on Monday evening 16th March to defend our 2013 title! Some classes have been combined for 2015 so the "Madrigal" class no longer exists. Instead we would enter the "Group of Singers" class which requires our own choice of two contrasting songs, with or without accompaniment.

Choral Celebration Saturday 21st March

This will take place at Stricklandgate Methodist Church, with morning and afternoon sessions. The day will be led by

Justin Doyle, a leading young choral conductor, who will give warm-up sessions throughout the day, as well as constructive feedback.

Choral Weekend 11th-12th July

- A Come & Sing day on Saturday 11th July, morning and afternoon, led by Hilary Davies, a natural voice practitioner and workshop and community choir leader. No specific work has been chosen for this, but it will have a community singing theme and so it will be quite different from previous years' Come & Sing events. It will however be suitable for singers of all kinds, including ourselves
- A recital by the Herdwyck Consort on Saturday evening in St Anne's Church, Ings
- The Festival Chorus will sing Dvorak's Stabat Mater on Sunday 12th July in Kendal Parish Church, to be conducted by Ian Jones

More details about all of these shortly.

www.mwwf.org.uk

New Members are always welcome in the tenor and bass sections. If you know of anyone who might be interested please have a word with them and ask them to consider joining us.

Money Matters

Accounts 2013/14

The accounts are now completed and signed off by the examiner. You have each received a copy with the AGM papers. As forecast in the June Newsletter the result was a small deficit, but of only £448. This still leaves us with a very healthy balance of just over £6,000, and about £1,000 of this is budgeted to be used up this year.

Subscriptions

As you know, the Committee has been able to keep these at £80 for this year largely because of successful fund raising efforts, so please continue to give these your full support. Thank you to those who have already paid their subscription, and a gentle reminder to those who have not yet got round to it as we need cash flow to meet ongoing expenses like the fees for our Director of Music and Accompanist and the cost of hiring the rehearsal room. And that leads to the next item.

Rehearsal room hire

We have received notice that from this season the cost of hire will increase from £40 to £60 an evening. This is still a preferential rate though not as preferential as before. It will cost some £600 extra this year – a big increase. The Committee did consider the possibility of alternative premises, but came to the conclusion that the advantages we now enjoy could not be found elsewhere and that charges elsewhere were likely to be no less than we will now pay. So we stay put.

Verdi Requiem Concert

And now for a bit of good news. The concert made a profit, and some of that is being distributed to the choirs that took part. The amount we may expect to get might almost pay for the cost of the rehearsals we had.

Gift Aid

A reminder to those of you that need to complete a self-assessment tax return that not all of the subscription counts for Gift Aid. The amount that counts for the tax year 2014/15 is £74.

Easy Fundraising

Please do not forget when you shop online to do it through Easy Fundraising so securing a donation from the supplier to the choir at no cost whatsoever to you. We continue to get some donations each quarter but it could be much more if everyone remembered to use the service. It is very easy. If you are unsure

how to do it just ask the Treasurer for an instruction sheet.

Book (and anything else) Stall

Please bring books that are cluttering up your shelves and we will sell them for 50p each, so raising funds for the Choir – last year we raised £150. Other acceptable items are jams, scones, fruit, etc., but please price up your own items.

Quiz

After a year's break, there will again be a quiz sheet which should be coming out in mid-November. The theme this year is "Odd One Out", and requires no knowledge of music or of Kendal. We have raised more than £200 from the quiz in other years.

But please don't just buy one for yourself! Take ten or more to sell to your friends and family, take some with you to other meetings, buy a batch and put them in with your Christmas cards, leave some at your local Post Office. The possibilities are almost endless!

Coffee Mornings

Our next Coffee Morning in the Town Hall will be on Friday 5th December from 9am until noon. This event usually raises around £200 for choir funds, with the cake stall accounting for around half of this. Please bake scones, biscuits and cakes to sell – smaller cakes sell particularly well. These can be brought to the Town Hall on the morning. We will also hold a raffle, so please look out suitable items that can be offered as prizes.

Catherine Alexander has very kindly offered to host a coffee morning at Castle Green Lodge, Castle Green Lane, Kendal LA9 6RG (opposite the top of Parkside Road) on Tuesday 4th November from 10am until noon, with donations to choir funds. Bring cakes for a cake stall and to have with coffee.

Social Matters

Summer Barbecue

The Summer Barbecue at Dorothy and Michael Davies's home in Grange-over-Sands was a most enjoyable afternoon, and gave our Director the chance of a well-earned bit of shut-eye in the sun. Thanks to everyone who helped in any way.



New Year Social

The Committee has decided that there should be a social in the new year – on Saturday 17th January – but would like your ideas on what form it should take. In recent years we have had a quiz followed by a delicious meal prepared by Duncan Hamer. Should we do the same this year, or would you prefer to do something different? Please let any member of the committee know what you think.

Oddfellows Arms

A few of us go to this friendly little pub just along Burneside Road after Tuesday rehearsals for a drink and a natter. You are most welcome to join us.

Section Reps:

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Bass: Arthur Robinson (01539 725955)

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<http://www.kendalsouthchoir.org.uk>