

Waltham Singers newsletter

Issue No 58
August 2015

From the Chair...

I hope you are all enjoying the sunshine and the summer break.

In writing my first newsletter as the new Chairman, I must first thank Gerald for his enormous contribution to the Choir as Chairman for the last five years. His energy, drive and attention to detail have been unflinching and have enabled the Choir to proceed seamlessly from concert to concert. Much of his effort has been quietly in the background and we have all benefited enormously. I'm sure everyone would want to join me in saying a big 'thank you'. His will be a hard act to follow and I am indebted to him that he has been so willing to help me with the new role.

It seems a long time since our 'Sense of Place' concert at Great Waltham Church in June where we were joined by the Fibre Optic Choir from New Hall School and the capable hands of Laurence Lyndon-Jones and Weston Jennings. The varied programme was well received, including the premiere of Jeffery Wilson's *Songs of Home* and another outing for Maxwell Davies' evocative *The Kestrel Road* (which we last performed as co-commissioners in its premiere season in 2004/5). The children sang with gusto and our audience was pleasingly swelled by their parents and grandparents! I think all agreed it was a successful collaboration and one we will be renewing for our spring concert at KEGS, with a work by Jonathan Dove (another premiere), *Arion and the Dolphin*.

47 members attended the AGM in June where there was lively discussion of a variety of matters which will be detailed in the Minutes, to be published soon. We are pleased to welcome two new committee members, Julie Warner and Bill Gray. I am hoping we can draw in a wider circle of members especially to focus on our social and fundraising activities. If anyone is interested in being involved with this, please let me know.

We were very sad to learn of the death of Mavis Brown who died on 2 May after a brief illness. Mavis had been a valued member of the Alto section since 1991, her first concert being at the Queen Elizabeth Hall with The Eynsford Concert Band. A number of us were able to attend her memorial service in June, where a packed church in Blackmore sang and remembered her life with affection. She will be greatly missed and we offer our condolences to Mike at this sad time.

The Autumn Term starts on 3 September at 8pm at St. Cedd's with our customary Open Rehearsal which, as usual, will end earlier to allow time for a glass of wine and a chance to catch up after the summer. Do encourage any potential members to come along and if you happen to know any tenors....!

Looking further ahead, a reminder that we are hosting a joint workshop with The Stondon Singers on Saturday 17 October from 10am to 5pm at New Hall School led by Philip Thorby, a specialist in 16th century Venetian music whose energy and passion come very highly recommended. This should be a really good event, 'hard work but inspirational' to quote Gerald. The workshop will provide a taste of some of the repertoire for our summer concert, which will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Cipriano de Rore who was Master of the Music at St Marks. A few places are still available: don't delay reserving yours.

This term we are preparing Mendelssohn's magnificent oratorio *Elijah* to perform at the Cathedral on 21 November. We will be joined by soloists Jeremy White (Royal Opera House), Tom Robson, Sarah Power, Kate Symonds-Joy and Ensemble OrQuesta (director Marcio da Silva). I'm sure many will remember the fun we had rehearsing with Marcio a few terms ago. We have been fortunate in securing sponsorship for this event from M&G. This should be a really marvellous occasion and I urge you to encourage your friends and relatives to come and join us.

It's early to think about Christmas, but we will finish the term with the Mencap Carol Concert on 15 December. Please note the date in your diary and support this worthwhile event.

Hoping to see you all on 3 September

Best wishes
Kate Hanson

Review
A SENSE OF PLACE
Waltham Singers at Great Waltham Church
20.06.15

Not for the first time, a world première for the Waltham Singers. For the 2015 summer concert they'd chosen A Sense of Place for their theme, and commissioned Jeffery Wilson to write a work in which the Singers could be joined by the Fibre Optics choir from New Hall School, both directed by Andrew Fardell. "Songs of Home" proved an enjoyably accessible collection, with pictorial Haikus and Essex folk embraced within the ancient Offices of the Old Religion, the children's voices leading the way. Good to hear a fresh setting of Bushes and Briars, first collected in Ingrave by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and a "Ballad of Politics" of the same Edwardian vintage, penned by Charles Benham in the authentic accent of rural Essex.

The youngsters brought us another local composer, Armstrong Gibbs, with a lively setting of Five Eyes by Walter de la Mare.

And they gave a commendably crisp account of London Bells, the central setting in Bob Chilcott's Songs and Cries of London Town, which also featured a lovely lilting Flower of Cities All.

From further afield, Peter Maxwell Davies' Kestrel Road, with words from the Orkney poet George Mackay Brown, a joint commission of ten years ago. Good to have the words recited as well as sung; this evocative sequence was perhaps the piece mostly firmly rooted in its location – kirk and croft, school and smithy, manse and mill. Excellently sung, too, especially the challenging slow movement Windfall.

And to start, Elgar's tunefully Romantic Songs of the Bavarian Highlands – beautifully controlled clarity in False Love, and a lilting piano part in Lullaby.

The two accompanists – Laurence Lyndon-Jones and Weston Jennings – probably clocked up the most Air Miles, with duet Dances from Hungary and the Ukraine, Brahms and Dvorak.

A refreshingly eclectic summer offering, performed with the enthusiasm and attention to detail that make this choir so reliably impressive.

Michael Gray - June 2015

<http://michaelgray.blogspot.co.uk/2015/06/a-sense-of-place.html>

Committee meetings:

The Committee members for 2015/16 are

Ian Aim, Sarah Bakewell, Mike Catterall, Bill Gray, Kate Hanson, Gerald Malton,
Sabine Nussey, Jemma Parker, Nadia Smart, Jenny Tait, Mike Wall and Julie Warner.

Our next committee meeting is on 9th September. Please let Kate Hanson or Nadia Smart know if you wish anything to be raised at that meeting.

50:50 Club News:

Winners for Draw 68 are:-

£50: Charlotte Malton £30: Noel Pereira

£25: Eeva Golding £20: Keith Kerr £20: Janis Croom

If you would like a number (or numbers, max 5) they cost £12 and we have three prize draws a year.

Half the income is returned in prizes and the other half helps to support our concert programme.

Please see Mike Wall for an application form, or pick one up at rehearsals from near the notice board.

Waltham Singers Income

Essentially the choir draws on three sources for its income. Looking at the last complete financial year (April 2014 to March 2015) the figures are

Subscriptions	£10,960 (45%)
Concert tickets & programmes	£7,651 (32%)
Fundraising	£5,520 (23%)

We have announced a small increase in subscriptions from September. Ticket sales for last year were disappointing and we are hoping that this year will see improved audience figures. The results for the June concert were very encouraging.

This leads me on to fundraising, which as you can see is very important because it provides us with a quarter of our income. Fundraising income for last year breaks down as follows

Gift aid	£1,880 (34%)
Quiz, weddings and socials	£1,193 (22%)
Member donations	£800 (14%)
Fifty-fifty Club	£758 (14%)
Friends donations	£655 (12%)
Programme advertising	£125 (2%)
Music library	£110 (2%)
Giving machine	£0 (0%)
Sponsorship	£0 (0%)

Most of these fundraising schemes involve members reaching into their pockets or persuading their families and friends to do likewise. The two exceptions are Gift aid, and after all my cajoling I hope that everyone who is eligible has completed a gift aid form by now, and The Giving Machine.

As you can see we received nothing last year from this source (although I have received a small amount recently). This is another way of raising money at no cost to yourself. If you buy goods or services online, there is every chance that the supplier will be registered to The Giving Machine. If you register with thegivingmachine.co.uk and nominate Waltham Singers as your chosen charity, then whenever you place an order online, make sure you access your supplier's website from the giving machine site. For just two extra clicks you will earn commission on your purchase which will come to Waltham Singers. So whether you're buying garden furniture from John Lewis, ordering clothes from Marks & Spencer or buying a book from Amazon – use the giving machine.

On the other zero entry in the list above, I can report that we have received £2000 from M&G as sponsorship for our November concert.

We are always open to new suggestions for fund raising schemes – so if you have any good ideas pass them on to the committee.

Mike Wall

To set up The Giving Machine:

Go to www.thegivingmachine.co.uk

Click on 'Join' and select 'Join as a giver'.

Set up an account using your email address, and nominating Waltham Singers as your chosen Cause.

When shopping, start at The Giving Machine website, and click on 'Go Shopping' to find the retailer you want. You can also instal a 'Shop&Give reminder' on your desktop or laptop.

Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2015

Thursday, 3 September	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Saturday, 17 October	10 am - 5 pm	New Hall School	Workshop with Philip Thorby
Sunday, 15 November	2.00 - 4.00 pm	New Hall School (tbc)	Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Saturday, 21 November	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 21 November	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert: <i>Elijah</i>
Thursday, 10 December	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Tuesday, 15 December	6.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mencap Carol Concert rehearsal
Tuesday, 15 December	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mencap Carol Concert

Spring Term 2016

Thursday, 7 January	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Saturday, 6 February		Quiz Night	Hulton Hall
Sunday, 6 March	2.00 - 4.00 pm		Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Saturday, 12 March	1.00 - 4.00 pm	KEGS	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 12 March	7.30 pm	KEGS	<i>Arion and the Dolphin</i> and other works
Thursday, 24 March	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term

Spring Term 2016

Thursday, 14 April	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Sunday, 12 June	2.00 - 4.00 pm		Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Thursday, 16 June	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Saturday, 18 June	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 18 June	7.30 pm	Gt t Waltham Church	Cipriano de Rore concert

Future Concert Dates

Saturday, 19 November 2016	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mozart C minor Mass, Sinfonia Concertante
Saturday, 18 March 2017	7.30 pm	KEGS	
31 March - 4 April 2017		Bruges	Choir tour
Saturday, 17 June 2017	7.30 pm	Gt Waltham Church	