

Dates For Your Diary

Please put these dates of our next four concerts into your diary:

Choral Workshop
26th September 2009
St. John's Church
Old Coulsdon

Autumn Concert
14th November 2009
United Reformed Church
Caterham

Christmas Carol Concert
12th December 2009
United Reformed Church
Caterham

Spring Concert
20th April 2010
St. John's Church
Old Coulsdon

Summer Concert
26th June 2010
De Stafford School
Caterham

Please direct any feedback, comments or suggestions to:
George Feichter, email: george@escs.org.uk



NEWSLETTER

2009

**making
music**

www.escs.org.uk

All music-lovers who live within striking distance of Limpsfield should know about the Oxted & Limpsfield Music Society, though if you've not heard about it you are not alone: it has been called "Limpsfield's best kept secret"! From October to April the Society presents five concerts, with professional musicians, in Hazelwood School's pleasant little theatre.

Since its foundation the O&LMS has always had a well-known pianist as its President. Its first was Eileen Joyce, who lived locally, and now we have Imogen Cooper, who opens the season with a concert devoted to piano works by Schubert. The other recitals will be given by the Badke Quartet (Haydn, Bartok and Brahms), violinist Sian Phillips with Per Rundberg (Beethoven and Elgar) and clarinetist Emma Johnson with the Harpham String Quartet (Brahms, Barber and Coleridge-Taylor). The fifth recital features the unusual combination of 'cello and accordion; this combination of instruments was apparently favoured by Rostropovitch who believed that the accordion, being non-percussive, was a more sympathetic partner than the piano.

Have I whetted your appetite? A season ticket for the five concerts costs £50 - only £10 per concert and pretty amazing, given the standing of some of the performers. One can purchase tickets for individual concerts - they are on a sliding scale from £16 to £12 depending on the artists concerned - and all tickets are transferable so, if you can't attend yourself, you can pass them on to fellow music-lovers. In addition to all this there are Club Evenings when local musicians entertain in members' homes, lovely venues like Oxted Place and Trevereux on Limpsfield Chart. An innovation this year will be a musical evening with supper at Tandridge Golf Club (which serves super food!).

We are so fortunate to have such wonderful concerts given by musicians of this calibre on our doorstep! Do contact Sue on 01883-347120 or sandksimpson@talktalk.net if you want to know how to sign up for a season of musical treats.

Sue Simpson

Radio 3 has been running a 'serious limerick' competition, and below are a couple on musical themes which were broadcast.

Rehearsals can at times be horrendous
Especially the "Missa Solemnis".
At times they are great
When we do Mahler 8,
But the Bruckner Motets are stupendous!
Colin Miller

Baroque music's great! Never dreary;
Often warm, always rich, sometimes eerie.
A consort of viols
Brings the warmest of smiles
To my face when I'm frazzled or weary.
Jacquelyne Morison

How about a competition for the choir? Karle has a few up his sleeve - here's a sample:

Delius felt beelious
When ride'n with Haydn!

Sue Simpson

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From our chairman:

Welcome to the 2009 newsletter. Another fairly good year with a concert and a carol concert in the Autumn term, and although I missed the Easter concert (Cruising back from Australia with my sister) I heard very good reports about it. The Summer concert was well attended in spite of Andy Murray playing in the Wimbledon semi-finals just as the concert started. The students threw themselves into the G & S parts and even the choir managed to act as well. I hope the men have recovered from kneeling down to take the oath.

This year we are having a concert in Dec. and a carol concert in Dec. as well as a workshop in Sept. So there will be a lot of work to do requiring commitment and support.

It was a great sadness to hear of the death of Jackie Richmond and many of us went to her funeral in Woldingham. She had been a member for 33 years and Treasurer for about 12. The choir enjoyed her hospitality for parties, garden mornings and letting us hold our committee meetings in her house.

We are so fortunate in having Ian to teach/conduct/get soloists for us in spite of us forgetting what we've learnt and talking at the same time as him. Jeffrey and Ian work so well together. We are so fortunate to have them.

I thank all the committee for their hard work, I don't think the choir realizes what goes on behind the scenes. The various fund raising events help enormously. Thanks for the parties, B & B, skittles, garden mornings, plant sales, etc. The visit to the Royal Opera House was fascinating.

Looking forward to seeing you all on Sept. 8th.

Cathy Pearce

From Sue Simpson:

June 27th 2009

By all accounts the Summer Concert went with a swing, but Karle and I were 'swinging' elsewhere: it was exactly fifty years to the day that we were married in Oxford's St. John's College Chapel and, obligingly, the College held its triennial Garden Party on that very day. Our sons joined us - even the one from Australia, the sun shone, the band played (and, yes, I did spare a thought for the choir when it struck up with "The Teddy Bears' Picnic"!), and we had a wonderful time meeting and greeting old friends, some of whom had sung in the Chapel choir at our wedding all those years ago. Not many people can boast a guest list of two thousand people at their Golden Wedding Party, even if we only knew a hundred or so of them.

At the Choir's Summer Party a few days later we were very touched to receive a beautiful David Austin 'Golden Celebration' rose - appropriately old-fashioned, like us, and fragrant, too! - and a personalised card picturing Caterham-on-the-Hill's fine Cedar Tree, just round the corner from our home, and signed by many choir members. Both rose and card will give us many happy memories of the ESCS - the concerts and the social events, but especially of the friends we have made through the choir over the last 29 years. Thank you to you all!

Sue Simpson

Jackie Richmond

Faure's Requiem was to be performed in the church just over the road soon after we came to live in Caterham forty years ago. I was looking for a choir to join and the ESCS was small enough then to fit into St. Mary's Church. It didn't cover itself in glory: Michael had to stop the performance when sopranos and organ parted company in the last movement... and I thought "that's one choir I won't be joining!" The performance was redeemed for me by watching an Alto in the front row who had such a lovely, serene face.

Years later I joined the choir, despite my earlier misgivings, having had a less-than-happy experience in another local choir, and became good friends with the lady with that lovely serene face, whose character matched her looks: Jackie. We became colleagues as well as friends when I became Hon. Sec. in 1982 as she was on the committee for a while in charge of the social side.

After the tragic early death of her husband, Brian, Jackie came to lunch one day, during which she said she very much needed a job to help fill the gap in her life. It just happened that Aldwyn was retiring after several years as a very effective Chairman, and our long-time Treasurer Joan Pate seemed the obvious person to take over at the helm. So - although Jackie had no previous experience with accounts, with a maths degree she was no stranger to figures - that's how Jackie became our Treasurer, a post she held for many years until shortly before her death.

Jackie wasn't just our Treasurer, though: she made her home available for Christmas and Summer parties - I remember a particular Summer party which was blessed with lovely weather so that we could enjoy her beautiful garden - and hosted many committee meetings in her elegant drawing room. She was always ready to volunteer her help - with the first Barn Dance, Bring & Buy sales, coffee mornings, Garden Days - and was just one of the nicest people one could hope to know and feel privileged to call a friend. There will be many in the choir who miss her presence as keenly as do I.

Sue Simpson



From our conductor:

As I write, I am able to look out at a day that defines the full glory of the English summer - dull, overcast.....and wet! Of course, we all know that the best of the English weather occurs when we are least able to enjoy it - notably when we are working.....or when we are out of the country! But isn't this just symptomatic of looking forward to any specific day or event and then finding we are unable to make it, or at least not fully enjoy it, for reasons beyond our control? So often, for example, I have looked forward to golfing days established in the diary months before, only to wake up to rain, wind - and every ache and pain in the back! Such disappointments are there for us to face and, I suppose, accept.

One of the joys of belonging to an organisation like ESCS is that we are not merely targeting one single day, even if it be a concert day. On a weekly basis, we can meet up to share our enthusiasm and love for choral singing with others of like mind - and in a friendly, happy and sociable atmosphere. ESCS is one of the very few true "community" choirs left. We exist for anyone who fancies singing in a choir. Obviously, without auditions, we have to accept that standards may vary and that not all singers will come from a musical background or have previous choral experience. Yet, by and large, we are able to present in public a good standard of performance at the end of each term. No matter what the weather, what other anxieties we might have, Tuesday evenings allow us to immerse ourselves in this different discipline each week, to lose ourselves for a couple of hours in sociable music-making.

ESCS will soon celebrate its 50th anniversary. In that time there have only been three musical directors; several current members also have long associations with the choir. However, over recent years we have also lost a number of long-serving members and from the heady heights of a membership numbering over 100 a few years ago, we now face a similar challenge to that confronting many other similar organisations. We have to look to the future of the choir and, if we are to encourage ESCS towards

at de Stafford and I arranged for me to find another room on the site for us to rehearse. Having viewed it, arranged it with the school, organised chairs and a keyboard and informed the choir over several weeks, the caretaker for the night decided he just couldn't be bothered, so we rehearsed in the small hall as usual!

The final "alarms and excursions" took place when I was informed that there was a wedding in St. John's at the time we should have been setting up for our Spring Concert. Help! After consultation with their Bookings Secretary, and the realisation that a lot of assumptions had been made on both sides (mea culpa!) it was all sorted out in the end.

So, in conclusion, it's a job which has its "moments". As I am writing this, with the whole of next season booked ahead, I wonder what the future will bring!

Melanie Watts-Read

From our booking secretary:

George has asked me to write a paragraph or two for the Newsletter about my role as Bookings Secretary. This is something I haven't attempted before, and the only thing I can think of to say is that the job has its ups and downs!

The "ups" are the times you will never hear about because all is going smoothly. Alas, the "downs" will always make their presence felt!

We boil at de Stafford when our concert is on a hot day (there is nothing I can do about that!), and we freeze at St. John's as the heating takes so long to get going (there is something I can do, and I have asked them to put it on much earlier).

And of course, with the best will in the world, things sometimes go wrong. Certain incidents spring to mind.....

The time when poor Joan was locked in St. John's, in the dark, between rehearsal and performance as no-one realised she was there.

The cold winter's night when the lady who was supposed to unlock Warlingham Church Hall for the Christmas Party had forgotten, which led to a deputation on her doorstep desperately ringing the doorbell (she is deaf).

The hot summer day when the caretaker at de Stafford School decided he would go home for his tea after the afternoon rehearsal, and returned late on the evening of our Summer Concert to find a puzzled queue of long-suffering audience and not-so-long-suffering performers awaiting him.

This last season has not been without its excitements as well.

Having contacted me to tell me that the school was performing "Greece" (yes, that is how she spelled it!), one of the office staff

another 50 years, we must recruit new members now. All amateur choirs seem to be suffering from this malady; it would seem to be a sign of the times. Since the demise of singing as a regular and important activity in schools, youngsters are not presenting themselves to choirs in the same numbers - although amateur operatic societies - via shows like Grease and High School Musical - continue to thrive. Our forthcoming workshop on September 26th, when we hope to welcome new singers to join with us in Faure's Requiem and Cantique de Jean Racine and the ever-popular Vivaldi Gloria cannot be taken for granted. We must be pro-active. Each and every one of us must try to encourage friends, acquaintances - even members of other choirs - to attend, otherwise the purpose of the exercise may well be lost.

And....whilst I am on the soapbox!....may I please stress how vital it is that present members of ESCS attend all rehearsals leading up to concerts. Apart from my regularly-voiced anxieties over planning programmes when I do not have a definite idea of the actual personnel we shall have for a concert, we lose an immense amount of learning and rehearsal time having to repeat music because of missing singers and this inevitably impinges on the concert standard. This coming term is very busy. We have a lot of music to get through and there simply is not time to lose. Recently, much against my natural will, I have very largely abandoned vocal warm-ups at the start of rehearsals, in order to press on with note-bashing and learning of repertoire. Even the customary Kennedy anecdotes have been reduced, but I am well aware that there needs to be a balance in rehearsals between concentrated work and periods of rest. ESCS is an amateur organisation, with a heavy bias towards the enjoyment of singing. For me, it would be totally counterproductive to work singers for 2 solid hours every Tuesday. BUT....if all singers concentrate and take in instruction (maybe even using an occasional pencil as an aid - nudge, nudge!!), I am convinced that learning speeds and confidence will both improve.

As I am sure you are aware, we have an eclectic mix within the choir. There are some who learn accurately and quickly, but

possibly more who are less confident and slower to absorb music and text. Pitching rehearsals to keep both (and other) camps content can be quite a delicate operation! I am proud to be musical director of ESCS. I believe that we produce results that, on the whole, are a tribute to the commitment and dynamic within ESCS. We must not let these standards slip. In the coming term, we have an opportunity to prove in public - and in a very wide range of repertoire - just how good we can be. I have already mentioned Vivaldi and Faure in September. In November, we are singing works by Purcell, Handel, Haydn, Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Vaughan Williams. The "Christmas" programme incorporates our traditional carols with the Christmas Oratorio by Saint-Saens. A demanding but exciting term of music ahead, I am sure you will agree - with something to please most singers! Let us make this a term to remember - and let us see if we can bolster our numbers for the future generations of ESCS.

Before I finish this sermon, I must again thank the irrepressible JG for his unstinting support and also the members of the committee, who do so much work "behind the scenes". Could I urge all members of ESCS to support and promote the upcoming "Come and Sing" workshop. Remember..."ESCS needs YOU....and your friends, too!!"

Earlier, I referred to not wanting to "flog" singers for the maximum available time in rehearsals. I recently had the pleasure of working again with Sir Charles Mackerras, now in his early 80's but still full of enthusiasm and musicianship. He has a reputation for using every minute of allotted rehearsal time and was recently working on a Friday afternoon with one of the major London orchestras. The session is due to finish at 5pm. The time is now 4.59.... and counting. The union rep has his eye on the second hand. "Err...justerr...one more thing I ...err...want to say", says Sir Charles. "Sorry, Sir Charles, it's time. It will have to wait", interjects the union rep. "But....err...only one other thing". "Sorry, Sir Charles, time is up - you will have to tell us tomorrow." The orchestra leaves with the speed of light - as most do! The following morning (Saturday), 10am, the orchestra is in place, tuned and awaiting

From our vice chairman:

The Committee would like to thank everybody for their efforts in selling tickets for the Summer Concert and promptly returning the proceeds, forms and unsold tickets.

As a result of your efforts we now have a much clearer idea of the pattern of ticket sales. You may be interested to know that of the 250 numbered tickets printed by George Feichter:

- 85 were sold before the concert (68 directly by choir members);
- 56 were sold at the door.
- Total sold: 141.

To keep a reasonably tight control of ticket sales, it is important to know which tickets have not been sold and the Committee now has a total of 89 tickets, both unsold and returned unsold by choir members, in its possession. A total of 230 tickets accounted for. Well done! The remaining 20 tickets not accounted for bring us back to our original total of 250.

Alun Jenkins

From our treasurer:

I took over the role of Honorary Treasurer from the late Jackie Richmond in September, 2008. As I was not a Committee member in 2007/2008 I was able to act as an independent examiner for the accounts which Jackie prepared to 31st August, 2008. During the year to 31st August, 2009 I have:

- attended all Committee meetings but one and presented financial updates
- submitted the accounts to 31st August, 2008 to the Charity Commission on 14th October, 2008 and the annual return on 26th March, 2009 both ahead of the filing deadline.
- secured gift aid tax repayments for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009
- kept an analysed cash book with a voucher reference for all expenses and reconciled this regularly with Lloyds and COIF accounts.

As a member of the Committee I can no longer act as an independent examiner so if any member knows anyone who would like to perform this function please let me know: no formal accountancy qualification is required by the Charity Commission to act as an independent examiner. If I do not hear from any members I will ask one of my contacts to act in this capacity.

With reduced interest earnings from COIF and only one gift aid tax repayment in 2009/2010 I see the greatest challenge for the Committee next year as cash management.

Michael Pearce

the conductor. Enter Sir Charles. "Good morning, everyone. Err, now, where was I? Err....oh yes, just one thing I...err...wanted to say to you when we finished yesterday.....err.....now, what was it? Oh, yes.....that's it! You won't be needed tomorrow! Goodbye!" (Divine retribution or what?!)

Enjoy your summer. I look forward to seeing you all again in early September.

Ian Kennedy

Secretary's report:

This year has been a fulfilling one for the choir, with all our concerts, social and fund raising activities. But the one very sad event was that our dear Jackie died in April after three years of fighting ill health. She was a stalwart of the choir and treasurer for thirteen years. She also hosted parties, committee meetings and garden days to raise money for us. I miss her as a friend and fellow alto and will always remember her smile and sense of humour. I was thrilled to see how many of us attended her funeral, and the priest said the wholehearted singing from the congregation affected him so emotionally that he was unable to sing the last verse of the hymn.

The concerts that we performed were all very different, and I think the vast majority of the choir enjoyed the versatility of the programming. We have had good comments from audience members which is always encouraging and it was lovely to see Della and Paul at our summer concert and the party afterwards.

In May, Linda Horton took a group of us to the Royal Albert Hall to sing Verdi's Requiem with about 1500 other people. It was a great experience for any choral singer, and if you have never taken part in one of these events, why not come next year and add another piece to your repertoire?

In June a group of us went on a backstage tour of the Royal Opera House. It was amazing to see the amount of work going on behind the scenes. Did you know that all their scenery is stored in Cardiff? We visited the room where all the costumes and ballet dresses are made, saw ballet dancers posing for photographs and sat in the auditorium and had a full explanation of how it was constructed and funded. We saw scenery being erected for the performance of 'Lulu' that night whilst scenery for the next opera was being worked on in the enormous storage area.

At the end of June we had our summer party. Thank you to Ceinwen and Keith for not only hosting that party, but also the post concert party two days earlier! We appreciate their kindness and for putting up with us all. We had a great time and it was a good opportunity for us to get to know each other more in a

relaxed atmosphere. We were able to congratulate Sue and Karle on their Golden Wedding anniversary and present them with a beautiful rose entitled 'Golden Memories'.

We have managed to fill two vacant posts on the committee, and Michael Pearce is doing a very professional job in the post of treasurer. Alun Jenkins has stepped in as Vice Chairman, and we welcome his input and advice. He has done great work in tightening up our ticket selling procedure so that we are much more aware of where we stand. I would like to mention George again, who spends large amounts of his limited spare time doing all our printing for us, The work is of such a high standard and is very much appreciated by all of us. He would like to hand over this job now, so if anyone has the appropriate skills, please let him know.

The first big event of next term is our Workshop on Sept. 26th. We really need your support to make it a success. If you were all to bring a friend (or friends), it would be very encouraging. I have circulated other choirs in the area and The Orpheus Centre, and if any of you know of anywhere else that I could contact, please email me on gillenglish@gmail.com.

We also have our skittles evening booked again for October 7th. It is really good fun and we only have 22 places, so please book early - I will happily take your money!

I would like to thank Jeffrey once again for his marvellous playing, both in rehearsals and concerts. Most of you know that he has moved to Rochester to be nearer his work. The good news is that he will still be coming to Caterham on Tuesday evenings to accompany our rehearsals, which is fantastic for us and we are so grateful that he has decided to do this.

Thank you also to Ian for the imaginative programming and for the humour he brings to our rehearsals. He manages to find just the right soloists for the part from his students at Guildhall - who seem to be in never ending supply, which never ceases to amaze me!

I do hope you all enjoy the rest of your summer break and look forward to seeing you on our first day of term, September 8th.

Gill English