

# Lancaster and District Choral Society

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Date: 23 May 2011

Venue: Holy Trinity Anglican Parish Church, Bolton-le-Sands

**Present:** Gordon Arkwright, Joan Ashworth, Richard Beveridge, Jim Birkett, Jennie Bisco, Bob Bond, Joyce Bond, Mary Bunting, Linda Cook, Hazel Denver, Peter Dodgson, Rosaleen Dodgson, Gaynor Entwistle, Eileen Feeney, Anna Fraser, Ian Fraser, Mary Garner, Pamela Gorham, Roger Heise, Russell Henri, Marianne Hutchence, Jacky Ireland, Alison Jackson, Marilyn Kenny, Janet Knott, MaryRose Lee, Sandra Lumb, Trisha Maiden, Margaret McCormick, Arton Medd, Christine Medd, Kath Mills, Betty Morrow, Helena Mullard, Margaret Perkins, John Perrin, John Robinson, Margaret Robinson, Peter Senior, Marion Smith, Margaret Spencer, Jean Stanyon, Jean Stephenson, Wendy Stevenson, Kate Thompson, Stephanie Tulej, John Whitrick, Warwick Wilson, Lynne Wyre

1 **Apologies:** Howard Abbott, Margaret Abbott, Richard Beveridge, Christine Harris, Maria Thomas

2 **Minutes of the 2010 AGM – matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

3 **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

4 **Chairman's Report** (John Robinson)

John welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting.

*John's Report:* "The Choral Society year 2010 – 2011 has been another successful year involving a lot of activity.

*Rehearsal venue:* We moved from Greaves Methodist Church to the New Building Assembly Hall of the Lancaster Royal Grammar School, where we started rehearsals in September 2010. It was a good venue, with good storage for our library and gear, but tended to be draughty during the winter. I now have good news and bad news for you. We are moving again, but currently, I am unable to disclose the new venue.

*Concerts:* In July, a section of the choir joined the 'Really Big Chorus' for the world premiere of Karl Jenkins' new work *Gloria* and Faure's *Requiem* and at the same time had a good weekend in London. The Choral Society repeated this concert in November, thereby performing the Northern Premiere of Jenkins' work. This was very well received. The Spring Concert was *The Dream of Gerontius* and was very well received by the critics.

The Choral Society had been asked earlier in the year by Ginny Scott, a member of the Society, to participate in a series of concerts spread over three days at the Grand Theatre, Lancaster, in November 2010. She had written a play with music covering the history of the Theatre, called *A Grand Life – a diary of a Little Theatre*. The experience was most enjoyable in spite of the illness of Kath Mills and John Perrin during that week. We must thank Kate Thompson and Neil Anderton who stood in for them at such short notice. Neil was already performing in the play.

It was decided during the second half of the year to undertake a short tour of Hampshire following connections made by Joyce Bond.

*Tickets:* The level of ticket sales by the membership is an ongoing issue that seems to dog the choir year on year and will be addressed in the Newsletter for this year.

*Attendance:* It is true that not everyone can be at every rehearsal but we have rules that cover this with respect being eligible to perform at concerts. However, there is concern that some of the Choir attend rehearsals inconsistently. In addition, notification of concert dates is given 4 to 8 months in advance, which, I feel, is enough notice, but some members still manage to make arrangements, often at a much later date, for the afternoon or evening of the concert dates. This is a concern.

*Obituaries:* Richard Masheder, a tenor with the Choral Society since Verdi's *Requiem* in 2007, died after leaving the rehearsal on 14 February. The Choir sang at his funeral. He will be missed.

Alice Round, the wife of our President Thomas Round, passed away on 30 December 2010. Our sincere condolences were offered to Thomas. We are only too aware and appreciate that it is a great loss to Thomas.

Also, Marjorie Close passed away early this year and who, with her husband, were members of the Choral Society in the 1970/80s.

*Thanks and gratitude:* I would like to take time to thank all those who have contributed to the success of the Choral Society during the year.

Finance and administration tasks – thanks go to Gordon Arkwright for all he does on behalf of the Choral Society as Treasurer et alia.

Music Committee – this committee proposes to the General Committee the year's programme. If you believe that there is a piece of choral music you think that the Society should consider for a concert, please let me know.

I would like to give great thanks to John Perrin for his work and guidance of the musical life of the Society, and to Kath Mills our accompanist, both of whom have undertaken extra work this year, especially with regard to the Hampshire tour.

I would like to thank Sue Chippendale for the many years' service in various roles and to thank those who have taken over those roles, namely: Jim Birkett – who as concert stage manager shows quiet efficiency in the role; Jacky Ireland – who has taken over the role of membership secretary with enthusiasm; and, Margaret Robinson – who has been managing the rehearsal CDs and dealing with the supplier Music Dynamics with consummate skill.

I would also like to thank the following:

Joyce Bond – for all her fund raising activities and for the additional work associated with the Hampshire tour.

Jean Stephenson – our Librarian, a role which takes a lot of work and commitment – for which we all are thankful.

Bob Bond for his work as Chief Steward and the efficient handling of the venue management.

Stephanie Tulej – our excellent publicity officer who produces great results in spite of the Lancaster Guardian.

Richard Beveridge – who has brought a new and refreshing look to the concert programmes and the annual newsletter compilation.

Lynne Wyre for her excellent work on the concert posters.

Kate Thompson for her work on our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Linda Cook for her work as meeting Minutes Secretary.

Roger Heise for his work as Society Secretary – and who hasn't been well for several weeks and we all hope he recovers soon.

Ginny Scott for Drama Factory and their participation in the Christmas Carol Concert.

Finally: an important means of publicising our concerts and our existence is our website, which was developed in 2009; to date it has had 174,417 hits.”

## 5 **Treasurer's Report** (Gordon Arkwright)

Copies of the accounts were available at the start of the meeting.

Gordon's Report: “Good evening. I hope you've all got a copy of this year's accounts, or at least are able to share a copy.

The huge difference on line 4 is because last year's amount of GiftAid includes £1149.65 for the previous year, and £1215.93 for last year.

You will see that all three of our concerts this season made financial losses. You will probably remember how the atrocious weather on 18 December contributed towards this at our Christmas Concert.

You may have managed to see details accounts for our first two concerts displayed on one of the notice boards during January/February. These accounts gave details of the tickets sold by choir members. Just over a hundred ticket envelopes ere prepared and distributed for the Autumn Concert and seventy-three for the Christmas concert. It is disappointing that 28 were returned with no tickets sold for Autumn and 21 for the Christmas concert.

This year, at the Royal Grammar School, there has been no income from the sale of teas at the rehearsal break, but the raffles have raised over £1000.

You will also see that we had £16,800 in the bank at this time last year, and there's £12,780 at present. I'm fairly certain the Spring Concert in 2010 was earlier than this year's, so most of its expenditure & income was accounted for by the end of that year.

There are still a few amounts outstanding from this year's concert and since 30 April I've also paid for our rehearsal costs at the Grammar School. I expect us to be able to start next season with about £8,500 in the bank.

Finally, you may recall that Geoff Lee decided to retire as our auditor and I was directed to John Day when I announced this vacancy at last year's AGM. John has audited these accounts and is willing to do it again next year if you agree.

Thank you all for your help and co-operation throughout the year.”

There is £9,224.58 at the moment in the Social Fund account – but £5,660 of this is money paid in by members going on the Hampshire trip to pay for the hotel/coach/hire of piano/drummer/Beaulieu trip.

## 6 **Musical Director's Report** (John Perrin)

John's Report: "This is our second season at Lancaster University's Great Hall, and we are fortunate to have such a good performing space. I have tried to maintain my policy of presenting new and established music. The Jenkins' *Gloria* was premiered at the Royal Albert Hall in July and it became the main focus for our Autumn Concert, coupled with Bob Chilcott's *Jazz Mass* and the Faure *Requiem*. A group of thirty singers from our Choir sang at the London premiere of the *Gloria*. The Christmas Concert was considered to be one of the best and was based mainly on a selection of carols by one of our long serving altos. The Choir had a major success with their April performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* which was universally acclaimed.

A group of singers to be known as The Chorale, are presently preparing for concerts in Winchester Cathedral and St Mary's Andover. I am grateful to Joyce Bond for her energy and flair in enabling this to happen.

Attendance and punctuality at rehearsals has been very good from the vast majority of singers, but it is disappointing when people drop out of concerts at the last minute due to diary clashes and other reasons within their control. We were fortunate to gain extra male singers this season. It is important that we continue to recruit tenors and basses, especially for the Berlioz. I am pleased that Kath Mills, our accompanist for many years, has made a quick recovery to good health after her serious illness in the autumn. She has been a major support to me at rehearsals. I am grateful to her for her dexterity and wise counsel. We have tried to encourage young voices to take part in our concerts and Ripley School Choirs and the Drama Factory, organised by Ginny Scott, were important contributions at Christmas. I would like to continue with the idea of giving concerts in major performing spaces outside the Lancaster area and suggestions for next year would be welcome.

Next season it is our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the spectacular Berlioz *Grande Messe Des Mortes* is scheduled for November. It is a large scale work with brass choirs and I am fortunate to have the support of the committee for this special concert. This will be followed by a concert of popular music entitled The Best of British in celebration of the Jubilee and the forthcoming Olympics. The music will include Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, Parry's *I was glad*, Negro spirituals arranged by Tippett, *The Mass of Peace* by Karl Jenkins and other music by Handel, Elgar, Henry Wood, Robertson, Taverner and Goodall as well as the Beatles. Hopefully a concert not to be missed.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continuing excellent support and commitment to the Choir. You have worked hard in preparing for the concerts and risen to the challenges and expectations. I hope that they have given you excitement and pleasure as well as delight that you have achieved something especially fulfilling with your music pursuits. Singing is infectious – it grips you and takes you to fresh emotional experiences. It is positive, peaceful and healthy."

## 7 **Equal Opportunities Report** (Kate Thompson)

Kate reported that it is three years since the Equal Opportunities Policy was formed and she thanked Sandra Lumb for her help in reviewing it. The only real concern she had last year was access to the rehearsal hall but would try to make sure the access is better our next venue.

The committee had talked about having a Register of Needs, which would be confidential. She told Choir members they could see her, in confidence, at any time about their EO needs.

## 8 Election of Officers

John Robinson told the meeting that there was a vacancy for the Equal Opportunities Officer and asked if anyone was willing to take on this role. The person need not be on the Committee but could feed into the meetings.

John Robinson, seconded by Roger Heise, proposed that John Day be the Society's Independent Examiner (external auditor). Carried unanimously.

John Robinson read out a list of the nominations and proposed, that they be elected:

Chairman:	John Robinson
Vice-Chairman:	Roger Heise
Treasurer:	Gordon Arkwright
Secretary:	Roger Heise
Publicity Secretary:	Stephanie Tulej
Librarian:	Jean Stephenson (assisted by Marion Taylor)
Chief Steward:	Bob Bond
Minute Secretary:	Linda Cook
Equal Opportunities:	
Committee member:	Joyce Bond Lynne Wyre
Member/Membership Secretary:	Jacky Ireland
Social Secretary:	Janet Knott
Social Treasurer	Julie Edge

The above were elected by a majority vote.

## 9 Any other business

- a) Betty Morrow, Honorary Life President and former Musical Director of the Society, commented that when she had looked at the programme and there were only about one-third of the members' names. She went on to say that her mother had left the Society some money in her will, which was what she herself had intended to do, but thought she would rather give it now so she knew on what it was spent! Betty presented John Robinson with a cheque. John thanked Betty for such a nice surprise.
- b) Anna Fraser asked why we had to leave the Grammar School. John Robinson replied that different school groups had wanted to use the room on a Monday, so have decided not to hire out the room during term time. John said we hoped to move to Ripley St Thomas School and would be having a meeting with them when we returned from Hampshire.
- c) Jim Birkett commented that the hire of the Great Hall for the Spring Concert didn't appear on the accounts. Gordon said we hadn't had the invoice yet, and it would be for about £1000.
- d) Stephanie Tulej thanked John Robinson for all his hard work over the past year.

## 10 Long Service Awards

John Robinson reported that he was hoping to give out these Awards, but will now give them out at the start of the next season.

The meeting ended at 7.40.