

Waltham Singers newsletter

Issue No 61
August 2016

From the Chair...

I am writing this in what seems to be the first hot spell of the summer, so I hope you are enjoying the summer break despite the lack of sunshine!

As I looked back over the last season I was struck by the breadth of music we had embraced, across five centuries of musical styles. Echoing what Andrew said at the AGM, I think this willingness to try something different is one of the strengths of the choir. It was a challenging year and we rose to it admirably.

We finished the season with a very successful Strawberry Tea in the Barn at New Hall organised by Sabine. Despite a spectacular diary clash with the British Grand Prix and the Men's Singles Final at Wimbledon, it was well attended and also raised over £340 for choir funds. The sun was shining and we were able to open up the Barn doors and spread outside for a very pleasant afternoon which we hope to repeat next summer. Meanwhile, if you have an urge to organise a walk, run a plant sale or a coffee morning or indeed anything else that would strengthen friendships and perhaps also raise small sums for the choir, please go ahead, or, if you need help, discuss it with a committee member. I think the more we do of this type of informal event the better.

Some of you will know that Anne and Bob Cowlin have decided that it is the right time to leave the choir after an impressive 43 years. They have been invaluable members since very soon after the choir was first founded by Peter Cross, with Bob being Chairman in the 1976-77 season. I'm sure everyone would want to join me in thanking them for their commitment and wishing them well for the future.

This Autumn we are introducing new membership cards along with slightly different arrangements for paying subs and collecting music. The intention is to streamline these things and make it easier to keep track of who is singing, who has music and who has paid subs, all of which has been rather a challenge of late. You will be sent a separate email detailing how it will work and I would be grateful if you could read it so the new arrangements run smoothly. The membership cards set out useful contacts, dates and some of the responsibilities of membership. I hope you find them helpful and would welcome feedback on the content/layout.

Our November concert in the Cathedral is a Mozart/Haydn programme featuring Mozart's C Minor Mass and a Haydn motet, *Insanae et Vanae Curae*. I will circulate a YouTube link to this and if you scroll down through the list there are sectional recordings too, which might be helpful. Martin Outram (viola) and his quartet partner Julian Leaper (violin) will play Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*. Though we were sad to say goodbye to Laurence in March, he is joining us again as the organist and the St Paul's Sinfonia (who played for the Duruflé/Bliss) will complete the bill. Contrary to our expectations, we have received a £2000 donation from M&G again to sponsor the evening which is good news. So let's sell lots of tickets, it should be a great concert.

Closer to hand, our first rehearsal of term is the Open Rehearsal on 8th September at St Cedd's and as usual we will finish singing early so we can have a drink and catch up with each other. Do encourage any interested singers you know to come along and try us. I am grateful to Will Foster for agreeing to accompany us at the start of term whilst the accompanist post is readvertised.

Looking forward to seeing you all on 8th September.

Best wishes.

Kate

FAREWELL!

After 43 years as members of the Waltham Singers, Bob and Anne Cowlin are leaving. As Bob has recently stopped working in Chelmsford, we have decided that the two-hour drive from Suffolk on a Thursday evening will be too onerous to do regularly, and that we will join more local choirs.

In the spring of 1973 Peter Cross, organist and choir master of Great Waltham parish church, started the Waltham Singers, which practised in the church. In September of that year Bob and I joined the choir separately. Bob was encouraged to do so by his friend Margaret Scott, and I because my three girls and I had recently moved into the house in the churchyard, opposite the Beehive pub, and I had always loved singing. It was my one night out in the week.

The secular choir was quite small; everyone knew everyone. Peter led us through some ambitious stuff for a village choir: Fauré Requiem the following Easter, and a piece by Purcell for double choir with only three to a part. After the weekly choir practice, some of the Waltham Singers would adjourn to the adjacent Six Bells pub, now a private house, which is how Bob and I got to know each other slowly over the years, culminating in our marriage in 1978.

As well as the many memorable concerts, and parties afterwards, there were mass cycling days, with as many as 60 adults and children pedalling through the Essex lanes, Tuesday nights running around a two-and-a-quarter mile route in Pleshey and, for two years running, a two-coach Waltham Singers expedition to join in the Hyde Park fun run in London, which included many of our children. And then there were the Boxing Day hockey matches, for all the family, with many more than 22 players on the recreation field, and tea afterwards at our house, Franklyn's, in the churchyard. There were also the riotous trips to Ceyrat, Great Waltham's twinned village in France, which started in 1977.

Sometime after Andrew took over from Peter in the 1980s, when the choir had outgrown both the church choir stalls and the school hall, it moved away from Great Waltham to larger premises in Chelmsford.

Over the 43 years, we have sung an immense amount of varied music, which has been a great privilege and pleasure, and made many friends. So thank you, Waltham Singers, for being such good company.

Anne Cowlin

Committee meetings:

The Committee members for 2016 are
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 7th September. Please let Kate Hanson or Nadia Smart know if you wish anything to be raised at that meeting.

Waltham Singers Music Library

Can you help?

Frances Harrison has dealt with the administrative aspect of our Music Library for the last seven years and would now like to hand on the task to a successor. She has done a great job in this unseen role and on behalf of the choir, I would like to say a big thank you.

The role includes dealing with queries from other choirs wishing to borrow scores from us, packing and posting them and then receiving and checking the returns. The scores are actually stored by Janis Croom, so you don't need room to store anything. There is also scope to develop the cataloguing system if that interests you. Frances will of course be on hand to support and advise her successor, so it shouldn't be difficult to get to grips what is needed.

If you think this might be an area you could cover, please let me know (katehanson7@gmail.com).

50:50 Club News:

Winners for Draw 74 are:-

**£50: Denise Law £30: Barbara Johnson £30: Frances Harrison
£25: Frances Harrison £20: Ros Brian**

Congratulations to all the winners, and don't forget you can purchase numbers in the 50:50 Club from me at any time. Limit of 5 numbers per person, £12 per number per year. Draws take place at the end of each term. 50% of the income is returned in prize money and 50% helps to fund the Waltham Singers concert programme.

Mike Wall

Gift Aid on your Choir Subscription:

I hope that all of you who are income tax payers have signed a gift aid form so that I am claiming tax back on your subscriptions and donations. (This includes Friends as well as Singers).

This is a valuable source of income for the Choir providing in the region of £2000 per annum.

If you have signed a form, but your circumstances have changed so that you are no longer paying tax, then you must let me know so that I can amend my records. Also if you change your address you must complete a new form.

If you would like to complete a Gift Aid Form just drop me an email and I will send you a form to print and complete.

Mike Wall
mikejwall@hotmail.com

Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2016

Thursday, 8 September	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Open rehearsal
Sunday, 13 November	2.00 - 4.00 pm	TBC	Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Saturday, 19 November	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 19 November	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mozart C minor Mass, Sinfonia Concertante
Thursday, 8 December	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term

Spring Term 2017

Thursday, 5 January	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Rehearsals resume
Saturday, 25 February	7.30 pm	Hulton Hall	Quiz Night
Sunday, 12 March	2.00 - 4.00 pm	TBC	Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Saturday, 18 March	1.00 - 4.00 pm	KEGS	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 18 March	7.30 pm	KEGS	Music for Lent
Thursday, 30 March	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
31 March - 4 April		Bruges	Choir tour: repertoire to include the Allegri <i>Miserere</i> and Faure <i>Requiem</i> and an Alan Bullard commission.

Summer Term 2017

Thursday, 20 April	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Rehearsals resume
Sunday, 11 June	2.00 - 4.00 pm	TBC	Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Thursday, 15 June	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Saturday, 17 June	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Great Waltham Church	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 17 June	7.30 pm	Great Waltham Church	"At the Opera"

Future Concert Dates

Saturday, 18 November 2017	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	<i>The Dream of Gerontius</i>
Wednesday, 6 December 2017	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mencap Carol Concert