

Conductor's Report for the Annual General Meeting April 2015

As we all grow older, memories are apt to fade. However, in the case of the Stondon Singers, never a group of people to follow the normal pattern of behaviour, I have this year found that memories have become sharper. I refer to points made in rehearsal, and the fact that these are increasingly acted upon in performance. A pleasing situation!

We have been fortunate to have two of our concerts accompanied not only with organ but instrumental ensembles this year, and we are duly grateful to the private sponsorship which has enabled this. The inclusion of Rutter's Requiem, perhaps not the most natural fodder for this choir and which may have raised a few eyebrows, at the very least attracted the public with a greater than usual audience turnout for our Autumn Concert. We also experienced a lovely day with Justin Doyle during the Autumn, and his youthful and imaginative approach to the repertoire which was covered remained musically vivid and always absorbing. The Christmas concert was accompanied by Michael Frith, a loyal organist who manages remarkable variety from the Blackmore organ, included Finzi's In Terra Pax as the longer item this year. Programmes with many shorter and stylistically varied items require much versatility, and so it was good to settle into the Classical tradition for our spring concert which also took us to the magnificent church at Great Waltham for the first time. The superb line-up of soloists and excellent orchestral ensemble was matched by fine singing from this choir.

Only three days ago we sang in St Paul's Cathedral. This was first booked as Choral Evensong until the cathedral authorities realised the date was the Feast of St Mark. Thus we sang a Eucharist service which gave us the opportunity to sing under the dome - the singing was much appreciated, and I know that we would be able to secure a date for a Choral Evensong in the future, if that is what members would once again support.

I should like to record my gratitude to Matthew Butt for taking rehearsals so effectively when I am away. I have now heard all the individual voices from each part over the course of this year which makes a useful record especially when deciding on solos or small ensembles within the larger framework. Indeed, one or two of these will be coming up in the repertoire we are currently approaching. We now move swiftly forward in our preparations for an annual highlight, the William Byrd Memorial Concert in July..

The coming season from September will be as varied as ever. During the autumn we shall be approaching the Chichester Psalms by Leonard Bernstein amongst other repertoire, and the Christmas Concert will see a return to Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols which we last performed in 2010. The spring concert 2016 explores the music of composers who have links with East Anglia and will take place at Ingatstone Hall, and the Byrd Concert of 2016 is currently being planned as Byrd and the European Fringe, taking us into some fresh and musically exciting territory. The original idea for

this came from a member, and I reiterate that further recommendations from members for future repertoire or indeed venues are always welcome.

It remains only for me to thank the Committee for good humored support, as well as competently run meetings by our Chairman, and to you yourselves, the Stondon Singers, who go from strength to strength in commitment and musicianship.

Christopher Tinker
Music Director
The Stondon Singers