

Minehead and District Choral Society AGM 2020

President's Address

This is my third AGM as President and I am beginning to wonder if I have put a curse on the Society - two missed concerts during that time and now a very questionable season because of the virus!! Shall I resign now?

What a pity we nearly got to sing Joseph – all was in place and then came lock down. Thank goodness we only had soloists to disappoint and not a whole orchestra – just Sue!

The Christmas Concert, however, was a real success. The weather rather depleted the audience, but the takings were still very good, and we must thank all those who braved the wind and the rain. The Stella Natalis came together on the night – the rhythms and words all a challenge for us, but we rose to it, (and it inspired a bass to join us for the next concert!) Stephanie Berner is to be congratulated on both her vivacity and expression in her solos, and hopefully we shall see her again before too long. I must mention too Stuart Paul on the trumpet, who followed successfully in the footsteps of our usual trumpeter, Andy Stark, and really did us proud in his solo lines. It was a joy to sing the carols with an orchestra, and thanks are due to Taunton Sinfonietta for their usual polished performance.

This is my chance to thank ,on your behalf, the committee for the work they put in behind the scenes, particularly to David Yates, who stepped into the breach as acting chair, when sadly Gordon reluctantly relinquished the role due to ill health. We offer both he and Dot our very best wishes. Thanks, too, to Sue and her deputy Chris for their unstinting practice and patience in accompanying us, and, of course, to Marcus, for his encouragement and musical direction on which we all depend.

It has been a difficult time for all of us since March, but all the more so for those involved in the musical scene, and particularly the soloists, who have had no engagements for some time and still must be finding life hard. Let us hope that we can all be back to some kind of normality in the not too distant future and take part in the singing which we all so much enjoy.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon!!

SECRETARY'S REPORT: 2019-20

Firstly I would like to welcome you all to this year's Annual General Meeting, the first we have ever held by Zoom! I hope you have been keeping well and have found plenty to keep you occupied during the lockdown months and afterwards. Although I've been working throughout, it's been very strange not having rehearsals of any kind in the evenings for the last 6 months, with no sign of this changing at the present.

The Choral Society continues to prosper musically, but inevitably our numbers are starting to decline, especially in the Tenor/Bass sections. This is something we will need to address if we are to continue to produce the high standard of performance the Society is known for. Hopefully the forthcoming concert programmes will encourage new members to join, especially those from a younger generation.

We all worked hard last Autumn to put together a concert that was enjoyed by everyone. I know we breathed a sigh of relief when we finished singing Karl Jenkin's "Stella Natalis", but I'm sure I wasn't the only one who went into the interval on a major high which sustained me all through the wonderful carols in the second half. And how lovely it was to be accompanied by Taunton Sinfonietta once again, a real highlight of our concerts. I look forward to our next, whenever it may be, with eager anticipation.

Several of our Committee Members are now stepping down either from their current roles or from the Committee at this AGM, and I'm sure you would like to join me in taking this opportunity to thank them for all their commitment and dedication over the time they have been on the Committee: Tim Edmonds who has done an excellent job in producing our concert programmes, and is now looking after our website; Dot Niccholls our speedy Minutes Secretary; Val Stuart who is stepping down as Treasurer, but has agreed to become our Making Music Rep, and Gordon Niccolls who is stepping down as Chair due to ill health. Gordon has kept us on the straight and narrow over some difficult times, enabling both the Committee and the Society to run smoothly and efficiently. We all wish him the very best and hope both he and our other colleagues continue to sing with us.

Finally I would like to thank those outside the Committee for all the work they do in supporting the Society, and to all of you, the Members, for without you there would be no Choral Society, and Minehead would be a much poorer place.

Thank you.

Librarian's Report. 2020

Firstly, my usual thank you to everyone for prompt return of music in December. It meant we could start Christmas preparations in time. Not a problem we will have this year. Thanks too to the members for making a great effort to return all the music in March. I have at last been able to take the boxes to Minehead library for transport to Yeovil.

As usual the team at Yeovil have been as helpful as possible, (the occasional bribe of a tin of biscuits when we have had to collect music ourselves from Yeovil, keeps Minehead Choral in favour!). They are planning to set up a website to highlight the Performing Arts across Somerset and will be asking groups such as the Choral to be involved, a good way to publicise ourselves.

For obvious reasons there is no music on order for future concerts at the moment.

Musical Director Report September 2020

What an extraordinary and challenging year! I hope our members have been keeping well and busy during the last 6 months of living with a global pandemic.

Our Christmas performance of Karl Jenkin's "Stella Natalis" was excellent. The hard work paid off for this challenging piece and we saved our best until the night. The orchestra of course were a massive support and it was a pleasure to be joined by Stephanie Berner as a new soprano soloist and her powerful young voice fitted the work extremely well.

Our rehearsal schedule worked – much better than the last time we performed this work. The carols too were much more comfortable and gave us a great second half and a fun end to the evening.

We started in January with the ever-popular Joseph and the Lloyd-Webber works. Not as easy as they sound, we were making a much better job of the tricky parts than previously and everyone was relaxing and enjoying a good sing together. It was deeply sad, but completely understandable, that we had to cancel the concert mid-March as the country went into lockdown for COVID19.

We all spent several weeks isolated and watching the situation develop. With no sign of a vaccine in sight, Government restrictions are easing and we may be able to get together following social distancing guidelines. At this point, we are unlikely to be able to put on an Autumn 2020 concert but I hope we can get together, even if it is informally and just socially.

I suggest that we push back the planned concert schedule by a year. When we are once more able to perform, I plan to start with the Lloyd-Webber concert, followed by our light popular song concert. These were originally scheduled by myself, with the support of the repertoire committee, with the aim of attracting new members and helping strengthen our Tenor and Bass sections. Alternating programmes of popular songs, traditional choral works and newer / unfamiliar pieces is a deliberate plan to help broaden our members' and audience's experience and introduce them to different works and styles.

I hope we can soon once more enjoy singing together. As always I am indebted to the committee to their hard work and to Sue for her unfailing support

Marcus Capel

4.9.20

**Minehead Choral Society AGM on 6th October 2020 via Zoom.
Treasurer's report.**

2019-2020 was certainly unlike any year we have experienced in our lives. The Covid 19 lockdown meant that our Andrew Lloyd Webber Spring concert had to be cancelled but we were fortunate that we incurred only minimum expenses. The Christmas 2019 concert featured Karl Jenkins' Stella Natalis along with 'Carols for All' and was very well attended. The bank balance is quite healthy because we only performed one concert but received a full years' subscription from members.

The bank balances are as follows:

TSB current account £2,954-20

NS & I deposit account £4542-33

TOTAL: £7,496-53

The membership stands at 66 which is 5 less than the previous year. Thank you to all those who paid by BACS as this makes the treasurer's job a lot easier! Thank you also to the members who were able to Gift Aid their subscriptions. We received a refund of £732-12 which was slightly down on the previous year (£797-07).

The profit from the weekly refreshments was £103-55 and thanks go to Vicky Borland and her helpers.

The income from businesses advertising in the concert programme was £270 compared with £125 last year. Thanks go to Daphne Midwood who once again did a good job approaching businesses and to Tim Edmonds who has aligned payments so that they go into the current financial year.

I would also like to thank Veronica Edmonds who has produced the computerised accounts and a comprehensive 'Ticket Sales & Costings' spreadsheet. Her help has been invaluable.

Grateful thanks also go to Simon Strong who has professionally checked our accounts free of charge.