

Chairman's Report

Say what you will about our choir, it is never dull! Roller-coasters are known to get the adrenalin going, and the one that we experienced this year is no exception. We climbed to the pinnacle with a resoundingly successful performance of Will Todd's 'Mass in Blue' and a standing ovation, closely followed in quick succession by a thoroughly enjoyable and amusing Christmas concert with Sir Richard Stilgoe, only to find ourselves tumbling back down the other side when we were presented with the precipitate departure of our Musical Director a couple of days before Christmas. We were all shocked and saddened to lose Andy who had done so much for the choir over the past eight years, introducing us to so many new and varied experiences: a CD recording, an opera, a Dorking Halls double-bill and some wonderful tours to name but a few.

What you *can* confidently say about Brockham Choral is that it is nothing if not resilient. Within two weeks of Andy's departure, the services of Ian Assersohn and Amy Bebbington had been procured and the choir was quickly on its way up again, heading towards what was to be a successful March concert, thanks to some compositions provided by Ian and an enjoyable programme of music 'From Sea to Sky' beautifully put together by Amy. The following June concert of 'Songs for Summer' with no less than *three* musical directors taking part, Patrick Barrett and Neil Ferris singing with the tenors all under the baton of Joanna Tomlinson, sent us all away on our summer break positively zinging.

I make no apologies for this next paragraph being a long one. It is because so many members rallied round and contributed so much over the past year and deserve a mention. The star is Ed, our secretary who gave an unbelievable amount of his time and organisational skills since Christmas to 'keep the show on the road'. Closely followed by Nick who, as treasurer, has kept our finances in surprisingly good shape considering the demands made upon our resources as a result of the upheaval caused by Andy's departure, ably assisted by Estelle and Jane, our 'social' team, who always manage to organise our social functions leaving the balance sheet in profit whilst still finding time to take on the newsletter; Phil by procuring advertising which goes a long way towards covering the cost of concert printing; Sue Tanton for her on-going campaign to procure grants; Pauline for her work on ticket sales, assisted by Romey and Pam, without which we would not have an audience; part reps Jenni L-P, Janet, Moira, Sue Tanton, Robin Luff and Ray who provide information for Mary and Victoria, as joint membership secretaries, who provided accurate records for the committee to manage the smooth running of the choir, and ensure that new members are made welcome; Lyn and Anne Slack for looking after our Friends, who, as a result, remain loyal supporters and promoters of ticket sales; Anne Tennant who unfailingly managed to find the music we required, despite the many last minute changes caused by Andy's departure; Ali for putting our concert programmes together so efficiently they barely need proof-reading; Fred, Estelle, Anne Mitchell and Jenni Lee-Potter who spent hours sifting through applications and interviewing candidates for the post of Musical Director; Jenni has also made a considerable contribution to choir funds with her raffles and Anne has also now taken on publicity; David John, as concert manager, who has ensured that our concerts have all run smoothly, and is a member of the Music Selection Committee along with Jenni L-P, Anne Mitchell and Jenny Bartholomew; Maureen and Gareth for their hospitality (Jolly, sectional rehearsals et al);

and Marion, who does so much more for us than simply accompanying our rehearsals. There is also a veritable army of helpers who did not have a specific role and those of you, including non-singers not mentioned above, who helped make it all happen know who you are and, I hope, are aware just how grateful we are.

It is heart-warming that the preceding paragraph is beginning to look like a roll-call of the membership. If you would like a mention next year, do step forward!

Despite all the hard work over the last two terms, we still found time for what Brockham is justly renowned for i.e., socialising and making friends. Reigate Beaumont and Broome Park care homes were entertained to some carol-singing prior to a buffet and beer in the Red Lion. The Old House at Home and Star pubs were also eased into the Christmas spirit with further carols and a significant boost to the bar takings! Betchworth Village Hall was filled with music, laughter and sated appetites at the annual dinner, and laughter and food predominated at our after concert parties which enable us to entertain and thank our guest conductors and soloists. Following the foregoing assault on everyone's waist-lines a conducted walk on Holmwood Common followed for those in need of same (although the benefit was probably somewhat negated by the ensuing curry!).

The year finished in the time honoured way with providing Teas on the Green in Brockham which, although not strictly a social function, has evolved into a chance for members to chat and talk about the plans for new choir year with the added satisfaction of raising funds to pay for it, closely followed by the Jolly, which is everyone's chance to let their hair down and reveal those hidden talents that we know lurk within all of our members, having enjoyed a veritable feast facilitated by Maureen, Gareth and the band of helpers.

As this report is already quite long enough, I will not list the important dates for you to mark up for the forth-coming term, rather refer you to the website www.brockhamchoral.org which you should all have as a 'book-mark' or 'favourite' in your computer.

Thanks to Amy Bebbington, Ian Assersohn, Joanna Tomlinson and Neil Ferris, who have provided us with such enjoyable rehearsals and given us renewed confidence, Brockham Choral has arrived at the beginning of a new choir year ready for a fresh and enthusiastic start with Patrick on the 6th September.

Anyone *can* sing. Everyone *needs* to sing.
It is simply a matter of life and breath.

Reuben Suckling (Chairman)