

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2018

My report, this time last year, opened with the statement that it had been a good year for Brockham Choral. I am delighted to say that we have just enjoyed another one, preparing to start the new season with increased membership numbers and a growing roll-call of Friends plus adequate funds in the capable hands of John Dimmer to enable us to press ahead with our plans for the coming year.

Thanks to the efforts that Pauline and the whole choir put into selling tickets backed up by Anne Mitchell's excellent work on publicity, audience numbers were much higher this year, particularly the 'Entente Musicale' in November and 'Sea and Sky' in March with the Sea Symphony and Lark Ascending - thanks to Dorking's very own Vaughan Williams and the delightful Natasha Petrovic, the latter attracting an audience of some 300. All concerts ran smoothly thanks to the work of your committee with Alison as concert manager. We continue to use the superb artwork created by Soo Abram, although Anne designed our June concert poster.

Our staging continues to enhance our ability to project ourselves to the audience, but is in need of some TLC and we will be needing a team to help check it over/make minor repairs. We are, as ever, indebted to Maureen and Gareth for providing space to park the trailer between concerts.

We continued our support for St John's school in December, inviting their choir to join us in our Christmas concert and we plan to meet with them for a workshop next year. June saw another 'café-style' concert in St Paul's, with 'Tea at the Ritz' bringing some light relief to both choir and audience and an opportunity to display the versatility of our members. The 'light relief' did not quite reach our librarians, Anne and Jenni, in as much as these concerts involve the acquisition of numerous individual copies of scores. However, they both breathed a '*sigh* of relief' when Nick stepped in and printed off copious copies, under license, in time for rehearsals to start, for which we were all grateful.

In December, members also took along the usual Christmas cheer to the residents of the Reigate Beaumont and Broome Park followed by a buffet and drinks at the Red Lion at Betchworth.

Needless to say, despite all the hard work put into four concerts, there was still time to enjoy a variety of social activities with a Quiz Evening and meal at the Rialto in Dorking, the Annual Dinner with homemade entertainment at Betchworth Village Hall, and the 'Chilli Walk' on Holmwood Common followed by a meal at the Red Chilli restaurant. Our thanks to Estelle and Jane who headed up the social committee and all those who assisted.

There is always a bonus when 'educational' events also turn out to be very sociable. Two such occasions occurred this year, one in the Gresham Centre with Paul Smith of Voces8 fame conducting a fascinating afternoon's workshop followed by an evening meal in the St Paul's Cote Brasserie; and the other, a 6 day visit to the Zezere Arts Festival in Portugal involving performing pieces in French, English and Czech alongside fellow enthusiasts from Portugal and Ireland and giving a concert comprising songs from 'Tea at the Ritz'. A very big thank you to Ed, Eloise, Lynne, Tortie and Nick for the preparation and organisation of same.

The year would not run as smoothly as it does without the help of part reps. Moira, Annie, Janet, Diana, Ray and Robin who feed information to Victoria and Mary who keep tabs on numbers and welcome new recruits and, of course all who have helped in some way when asked by any of the above, ranging from giving our MD a lift to the station, to producing food for a dinner and much else

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besides. The wider we spread the load, the lighter the task. We are still looking for someone to co-ordinate the sale of advertising space in our concert programmes, a job so ably carried out by Phil to date but who is now busy co-ordinating the whole programme. Can you help?

The Brockham fan club, otherwise known as 'Friends' has grown in popularity, thanks to the work of Romey ably assisted by Anne Slack , offering benefits of a ticket discount at 30%, free cushions (very welcome in St. Martin's), free programmes and glass of wine as well as reserved seating make it well worthwhile. Do you know of anyone that you would like to offer these benefits to?

Perhaps we should also offer some benefits for new recruits to the bass section! We sorely miss Tony Newell who recently retired from our ranks after many years of loyal support.

The standard of the choir's performance improves year on year. Thanks to the 'dream ticket' of Patrick and Marion, (not forgetting Patrick's stand-in, the delightful Victoria) who made our rehearsals so entertaining and enjoyable, we simply could not fail to improve. Count your blessings, Brockham. They are many.

We all look forward to the coming season with Britten's St Nicolas in December with guest appearance from the Farnham Youth Choir, the Dvorak Stabat Mater in March and an evening of African and ethnic music in June.

I look forward to seeing you all at our AGM on September 4th in St John's School. The first rehearsal is scheduled for the following Tuesday 11th, same place. For further information, see the web-site.

Reuben