

Brockham Choral Chairperson's Report July 2021

As I finish my second year as Chairperson, I would prefer to have been reminiscing about the number of wonderful concerts we had been able to perform, but instead I look back on another different year. The first word I think of is 'adaptability'.

What a lot we have missed: rehearsing together, socialising as a group together, and perhaps most of all the wonderful sense of joy and satisfaction that we have when a concert delivers a musical feast that is enjoyed by both performers and audience alike.

Despite all the setbacks, disappointment, and frustration of not being able to sing together this year, our choir has continued with a Musical Director and Accompanist who are professional, enthusiastic, and encouraging, choir members who are committed, adaptable, and sociable, and a committee who work well together as a team.

On the 3rd July twenty five members met to discuss the future of the choir and all members were invited to complete a questionnaire to share their views. Several key issues were raised and discussed, including the importance of remaining a welcoming, fun, and sociable choir with high quality singing and a mixed choral repertoire. Many useful suggestions emerged from the responses and will be addressed by the committee in the new season. We need to keep the recruitment of new members as a high priority, including using social media and to continue to nurture new members and less confident singers, and encourage one another through small group practice, committed but flexible attendance, maintaining our non-auditioning status and maintaining a reasonable level for subs.

We have a choir to be proud of – we were ready to sing with Cole directing just as we had to go into lockdown in Spring 2020 and we will be ready to sing again thanks to the hard work of everyone involved in the choir.

Cole deserves a medal for his perseverance. His expertise in setting up the Zoom rehearsals was mind-blowing and even the less enthusiastic recognised the benefit of singing together in this way. Despite all the challenges (and there have been many!) Cole remained cheerful and encouraging. Our wonderful Marion continued to offer her expertise and worked hard to produce recordings of accompaniments for us. Thank you both so much.

I particularly want to thank Ed Criswick for his sterling work as our Secretary and Website Co-ordinator. Despite so much not happening this year, the work for Ed has continued unrelentingly. I am also extremely grateful to Mick Rance for taking on the task of Financial Administrator and preparing the annual accounts as well as hours spent on Risk Assessments, but every member of the committee – Anne, Jane, Nick, Pam, Phil, and Reuben – has worked hard to maintain the momentum of the choir during this challenging period.

Our thanks also go to Mary and Tortie for their ongoing work as Membership Secretaries, to Romey as Friends Secretary and to our Part Reps, Mary, Janet, Moira, Diana, Robin and Ray - all

of whom have helped to keep the choir connected over this time. Thanks to Sue Tanton who has continued to act on our behalf as Grants Co-ordinator and to Jenni as Librarian. The fun of the 100 Club continued with Tony arranging the monthly zoom draws and we even managed a couple of lovely Zoom socials – with Fred Harrison in a starring role for a “Dessert Island Disc” evening, and Jane and Ed testing our brains with a quiz.

We have only one direction to go in now – forwards in a positive mode...

As I write this, we are still facing some uncertainty, despite the easing of pandemic imposed restrictions, but just as the Proms are going ahead successfully, we are continuing to plan for a wonderful concert on the 4th December, with great soloists and the prestigious Academy of Ancient Music joining us for a performance of Messiah that will raise the roof of St Martin’s Church. As things stand, for now we intend to begin safely rehearsing again from the 14th September – Halleluiah!

We can also look forward to singing a Bach Passion in the Spring, and enjoying our 70th Anniversary Celebration Dinner which will be held at Betchworth Golf Club on the 13th May.

As we look ahead to next year, let’s vow to put our hearts and souls into our choir and...

KEEP SINGING!

Estelle Earnshaw
Chairperson
August 2021