



FCS 2019 Newsletter

Welcome to your Summer update

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A message from our Chairman, Roger Burbidge



One day last Autumn I came across a brown envelope in church marked "Fakenham Choral Society". On opening it I found a programme (costing 6d), dated May 17th 1878. The concert, held at the Corn Exchange, was to be given by "Fakenham Choral Society and Friends" Where the envelope came from I have no idea. The concert programme was fascinating. Totalling 18 items, it ranged from oratorio choruses, solos, instrumental items and church music. So the type of music we perform may have been heard in Fakenham for at least the last 140 years!

from Janet. An emotional last rehearsal and social, complete with special home made cake, rounded off Janet's time with us.

Mark very quickly settled in, bringing his vast knowledge and choral music expertise to the benefit of FCS. An electrifying Nelson Mass and thoughtful Duruflé Requiem at Easter was followed by four Handel Coronation Anthems and John Rutter's Feel the Spirit (a wonderfully contrasting programme).

We look forward with excitement to next season's mix of works.

I would like to thank the Committee, who have worked tirelessly during the year. So much goes on behind the

scenes to keep FCS running smoothly. I must also extend our gratitude to our Stewards and the many members who help in so many ways, but especially around concert times. Without you all, and of course the singing members, FCS would not flourish, and possibly

couldn't survive. To enable us to perform live music in this beautiful part of the country, and to keep alive a long tradition of music making, thank you all so much. And of course, grateful thanks to our Patron, Lady Leicester, for hosting our garden party once again.

We learnt at the end of term that Jim, our accompanist for 6½ years was moving to Yorkshire. We wish him and his wife well in their new life and thank him for his support and expertise.

So, to the future. We are trying to start planning two years ahead so we can get the most from our publicity, obtain sponsorship, avoid clashes and book the venues, soloists and musicians we want.

As for the concert programme I found, I passed it to the Fakenham Archive Group to add to their collection.

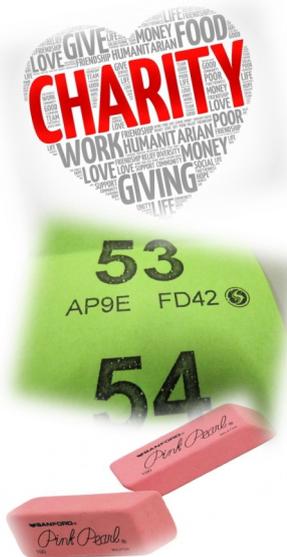
Wishing you all a restful few weeks until we all gather again on the 10th of September.

Roger



One of the things which amazes singers who move into the area is how much music making there is in north Norfolk. As a chorister, I could be out singing every night with a different choir (if I had the energy and my voice could stand it of course!).

At about the time I discovered the envelope, Mark was appointed as our new MD, taking over





The view from out front. Mark reflects on his first year and what's in store...

First of all, thank you for making my first year with the Society so pleasurable. Looking back over the last few months I realise how much I have enjoyed our weekly Tuesday evening rehearsals.

For our December concert, we were not treated to the best of weather but we managed to give a wonderful performance nevertheless. Ably backed by eight fantastic brass players, the concert was certainly not the quietest ever! The Christmas choruses from Handel's *Messiah* were a perfect way to start this seasonal concert and you certainly rose to the occasion. The excitement of Rutter's *Gloria* was a thrilling finale to the first half and ten weeks of hard work clearly paid off. The more familiar territory of Christmas carols in the second half had added spice with

eight brass players to accompany us along with the string quartet for the more reflective pieces.

For the *Come and Sing Day* in February, we were joined by Posy Walton and five orchestral players for Rutter's *Feel the Spirit*. A large group of singers worked hard throughout the day before performing to a small but appreciative audience. Although Posy isn't a mezzo soprano, she gave a stunning performance which obviously inspired the singers to produce a fine performance.

In March, we performed Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Durufle's *Requiem* in Wells-next-the-Sea. We were joined by four exceptional soloists including the amazing Angela Brun who excelled in the coloratura in the Mass. The quality of our singing in the Haydn

surpassed all my expectations leading to an outstanding performance of this dramatic work. I was delighted by how well we performed the Gregorian chant in Durufle which created a suitably religious atmosphere to the performance.

For our final concert, we returned to Fakenham Parish Church for Handel's *Coronation Anthems* and Rutter's

Feel the spirit. For many of us, it was the first time we had performed all four anthems and as we discovered in the

rehearsals that they are not easy! However, by the time we came to the performance, we knew these pieces well and the result was a stunning rendition of Handel's masterpiece. The Rutter had worked so well in the February *Come and Sing Day* that by popular

demand, we learnt it with the whole choir. Joined by mezzo soprano, Evie Anderson, this was a fitting finish to the season.

Thank you for your hard work every Tuesday evening and for three excellent concerts. Thanks also go to Jim for his playing in rehearsals and concerts and we wish him all the best for his future career in Yorkshire. Thank you to the Committee for all your hard work and dedication to running the Society. Thank you to all our volunteers who work so hard to create a concert venue for each performance and thank you to the Friends for their generous support and to everyone who helps in any way to make Fakenham Choral Society such a success..

I'm now looking forward to our second season and I'm also very excited about the music we have chosen for the December concert.

Mark

"The quality of our singing in the Haydn surpassed all my expectations.."

30

Hours taken to rub out score markings after the summer concert!



What's the score? An update from our Librarians

First, a massive thanks to everyone for returning their scores on time. When we started nine years ago chasing choir members was sometimes quite a task. But gathering everything in seems to have become easier over the years.

One thing that's still quite a challenge is cleaning up scores before returning them to the library. So thank you again to the merry crowd who joined us for our rubbing out party last month.

Until now we've always assured everyone that

handing in marked up scores is fine. However, following the summer concert we found it took around 30 person-hours to clean everything up. Maybe this is for a very good reason - more pencils in use during rehearsals? So our apologies in advance if in the future we propose handing back the clean-up task to individual members. (And you might consider removing the previous user's pencilling before you add your own.)

On a more technical note. The scores we'll be handing out for the Bach

cantatas in our Christmas concert are the **Breitkopf edition**. For those who want their own copies, these are available from Amazon but don't forget that AbeBooks is also a good online source if you're happy with second hand. The carols will be, as ever, from Carols for Choirs.

Sue and Tim

A 'Thank You' to our Friends

We are delighted to extend a very big thank you to our wonderful Friends of Fakenham Choral Society for their continued support and encouragement this past season.

The annual subscriptions of our Friends provide a valuable and much appreciated boost to our income at a time when the cost of putting on concerts continues to rise.

Our next project using Friends' subscriptions is to update our conductor's

podium for something smarter, more flexible and easier to put up.

Many Friends are past members, family or friends of current choir members and local people who enjoy our concerts and want to support the choir in this special way.

The continuing interest and support of our Friends is never taken for granted and we very much hope to welcome them again for the 2019-20 season.

It would be lovely to



welcome some additional Friends for the coming season, so if you know of anyone who would like to support FCS in this way please encourage them to join.

The annual subscription remains £20 for a single and £35 for a joint membership.

Friends enjoy early priority booking for tickets, reserved seating,

a free programme, complimentary drink and nibbles at our Friends' pre-concert reception and an invitation to the FCS end of season Garden Party.

Prospective Friends can contact me directly or you are welcome to ask me for a membership form on their behalf at choir rehearsal.

Email: stephwalsh65@icloud.com

Phone: 01263 861097

Stephanie Walsh



Thanks to Diana, our raffle Queen, can you guess how much has been raised for FCS funds in the last 5 years?

A: £890 B: £1,011 C: £1,106

And how much for external charities at our Come & Sings?

A: £1,290 B: £1,368 C: £1,484

Answers can be found in our newsletter articles

"Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls.

You express, when you sing, your soul in song. And when you get together with a group of other singers, it becomes more than the sum of the parts."

John Rutter



Come & Sing day 2020

After two very jazzy years with works by modern composers we have gone back to more traditional choral music for our C&S day on Saturday 15 February 2020 in Fakenham Academy.

Haydn's Creation has always been a firm favourite with singers and part of the staple Choral Society tradition so we hope that there will be a good blend of singers familiar with the work as well as those new to it.

We will not be attempting to sing it all! We shall be singing some of the choruses and hope to

have a few musicians to make the performance at the end of the day special.

The day will take the usual format of morning and afternoon workshops and a short performance at 5pm. Once again as well as raising funds for FCS we will be raising money for charity with singers and audience donations and a raffle on the day.

Please put the date in your diary and support what is always a very enjoyable day.

Rosemary

So how much does it cost to run FCS? The fundraising challenge from our Treasurers

Just after the financial year end a preliminary look at the finances suggests that they are in better shape than they have been for a few years. This more robust financial base means that we now have additional flexibility in our finances and organising expensive concerts won't be the frightening proposition it once was!

You might be interested to know a bit more about our finances. The weekly costs are substantial, and include hall hire (recently increased by 45%), paying for the chairs to be set out, MD and accompanist fees, insurance, piano tuning, music hire etc.

These costs, which do not include other costs such as the website, administration costs, electrical testing, asset repairs and so on, amount to almost 80% of members' subscriptions (nearly £9000).

Of course, we try and offset some of these costs in different ways, such as make and bake sales, which raised nearly £240, and the Christmas tree festival, which raised £115. Gift aid also makes an invaluable contribution.

There are many people who contribute towards the financial work of FCS, without whom the Treasurers' job would be considerably more onerous. Many thanks to:

- **Carol Jennings**, who deals with membership and last year paid in a whopping £11,000
- **Colin Blackmore**, who manages concert ticket sales and last year paid in the grand sum of over £4000
- **Rosemary Dear**, who in running the Come and Sing events banked over £3000, and also arranged sponsorships worth over £1700 to the choir
- **Diana Lyons**, who from 2014 to date has raised a considerable amount of

money from raffles, for FCS at garden parties (£1106) and for FCS and other charities at our come and sing events (£1368)

• **Steph Walsh**, our Friends' group secretary, who last year banked nearly £800 of Friends' subscriptions. Over the years the Friends have paid for a keyboard, speakers, music stands, staging, and other items.

This is a good illustration of how both large and small tasks can be split between volunteers, who do not have to be on the committee, and how vital their contribution is. FCS is no longer a small organisation and cannot rely on a small number of volunteers to do all the work that is necessary.

If you feel you can offer some help please do say!

Gill and Barbara

80%

Proportion of our subs is needed to cover basic weekly running costs (c£9,000)

Other Expenses

- **Website**
- **PAT testing**
- **Repairs**
- **Admin**
- **Concerts**

Other Income

- **Sales etc.**
- **Raffles**
- **Gift Aid**
- **Sponsors**
- **Ticket Sales**

Each summer the committee debate the tricky subject of subs and how much they will be for the next season.

They consider the running costs of FCS: MD and accompanist fees, hire of the SA hall, insurance, music hire costs, admin costs, any new items which may need to be purchased or repaired, and the possibility that any of these may rise during the season.

We do not need to make a profit but we do need to cover these running

costs from the subs and to have some funds for contingency purposes at hand to finance setting up and planning concerts.

The 2019/20 season sees an increase in the hire fee we pay to the Salvation Army each week. For many years this has remained the same but the SA is facing a substantial increase in utility costs and building maintenance. The hire costs are still very reasonable, but will increase FCS running

Subscriptions: 2019/2020

costs by £11.50 a week, £460 approx. over the weeks we rehearse.

So the committee have decided to increase the subs for 2019/20 to £126 which is still very good value per week.

As well as options to pay in full in September or 50:50 September and January, we can make ad-hoc arrangements on an individual basis to make subs more manageable. In confidence please contact either Carol

Jennings (membership secretary), Gill Ashby or Barbara Wyvill (our Treasurers) who will work together with you to come to a suitable agreement.

For context, there are 34 rehearsals next season, equivalent to £3.71 per week, or the cost of an Aldiss coffee and scone.



Sponsorship Update

FCS has been very fortunate in 2018/19 to retain the support of some loyal corporate sponsors who have been willing to support us financially. Some are helping towards a specific concert cost, like printing concert programmes, a trend we would like to encourage.

We have been delighted to welcome support from our patron Lady

Leicester who has agreed to sponsor the leader of the orchestra for the coming year.

Concerts are increasingly costly to produce and in order to keep our concert tickets prices as reasonable as possible we need not only to retain the support of the current sponsors but actively seek out new ones.

In 2018 the committee spent time revising the



FCS sponsorship scheme to create different levels of sponsorship and to make it more flexible to encourage local businesses and shops to support FCS. Please ask if you'd like a copy.

Sponsors can be individuals, businesses or shops and it is much more likely a personal link will have a favourable response.

So we need more help from FCS members (aka YOU) in actively seeking out and suggesting new sponsors. Ideally we also need someone who would take an active role in following up suggestions.

So please give some thought to how you might help find those much needed extra sponsors for 2019/20!

Rosemary

2019/2020 Advertising Leaflet

Help spread the news about
our next concert season!
Electronic Copy attached
to the Newsletter

The 'C' word!!

Fakenham Christmas Tree Festival 2019

I'm sure that most people won't be wanting to think about Christmas at this time of the year! However, I am pleased to say that our application for a tree at the 2019 festival has again been successful. The festival will run from Thursday 28th November to Thursday 5th December. Luckily the decorations for last year's tree have been kept, so there will be less work to prepare for this year's tree. However, if you have ideas about how to improve the tree décor please do let me know.

Please can I ask for your help in providing the following:

Donations for tombola prizes (we need to supply 5 prizes by mid-October). 1000 prizes are needed to keep the tombola running.

Volunteers to help at the festival. We need to provide a minimum of 10 hours volunteering across the 8 days of the festival. These are in 2 hour slots; please do let me know if you can help, and what sort of activity you would prefer (raffle, tombola, stewarding, refreshments). I need to notify these by the end of September, so the earlier you can let me know the better!

Nearer the time I will also be asking for help to erect and dismantle the tree, and for some of the props that we used last time. We will be able to use our excellent new trifold leaflet for publicity!

Gill



Tickling the FCS ivories..

With Jim off to Yorkshire and a new job, recruiting his replacement has been high on the Committee's agenda.

Already in place to cover Jim's world cruise in the Spring term, **Adrian Richards** has kindly agreed to extend this to the Autumn too. This will give us more time to find a new full time rehearsal pianist.

For those who don't know Adrian (he has accompanied FCS in the past), here's a brief biography. He is currently Director of Music at King's Lynn Minster and editor of the Norfolk Organists' Association Journal.

Adrian began his musical career as a cathedral choirboy in Birmingham and became a church organist at the age of 14. After three years as organ scholar of Hull University (1981-84) and the successful attainment of a music degree specialising in performance and choral conducting, he moved to London where he worked in Artists and Repertoire, production and marketing for EMI Classics, Warner Classics and ultimately Chandos Records in production and website content. Adrian has performed in most cathedrals in the country and a number of major recital venues. He is a teacher of piano, organ and theory.

I'm sure we'll all give Adrian a very warm welcome on 10th September.



SIMPLE THINGS

- Have you moved house, changed phone number or email address? Please let us know!
- Prompt payment of subs (cheque or cash) at the first rehearsal you attend in the term really helps.
- Pop subs in a named envelope and please make cheques payable to Fakenham Choral Society.
- Know a friendly business who might consider sponsoring FCS? Speak to them direct or pass on their details.
- Been to a great concert? What was good about it? Is it something we could do? Don't keep it to yourself!
- Have some expertise which would benefit the choir? Don't be shy, please let us know (no need to join the committee!)
- Got a fund raising idea (remember no alcohol or gambling at the SA Hall)? We're all ears!
- Treat library scores with care and respect. Use a soft pencil and mark lightly please.
- Know someone who's keen to join? We're pretty much at capacity, so always contact Carol first.
- Be considerate to new members. You were new once. Welcome them and remember, no seat has a name on it.
- Don't forget to visit the website for lots of interesting and useful stuff. Member's area password is **Cecilia**
- We're recruiting for part reps to represent fellow singers. Could you be that someone?



Your Key Contacts:

Roger Burbidge (Chair)	01328 851848
Rosemary Dear (Vice Chair,	dear_brian@hotmail.com 01328 851776
Gill Ashby (Treasurer, 1st Aid lead)	gillashby28@gmail.com 01328 878639
Barbara Wyvill (Treasurer, Gift Aid)	barbara@educari.com 01328 878790
Tracey Thompson (Secretary, Group Emails, GDPR)	thompta49@gmail.com 01362 668938
Tim & Sue Burton (Librarians, Website,	burtons@mimicottage.net 01328 700165
Colin Blackmore (Committee, Concert	blackburns12@btinternet.com 01485 544335
Diana Lyons (Committee, Raffle)	dianarlyons@aol.com 01328 863348
Philippa Allen (Committee)	reflex@waitrose.com
Charles Davison (Committee)	charles.davison@btinternet.com
Mark Jones (Musical Director)	markhughjones0910@gmail.com
Carol Jennings (Membership)	carol.jennings2@btinternet.com 01328 738482



www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org



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AUTUMN TERM DATES

September 10th, 17th, 24th

October 1st (AGM), 8th, 15th,
29th (No rehearsal 22nd)

November 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

December 3rd, 10th

Cantatas and Carols
Sat 14th December, 5.30pm
Fakenham Parish Church

Bach Cantatas:
No. 70: Wachet! Betet!
No. 141: Wachet Auf
No. 191: Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Plus a selection of carols

SPRING TERM DATES

January 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

February 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th

March 3rd, 10th

Mendelssohn 'Elijah'
Sat 14th March, 7.30pm
Fakenham Parish Church

SUMMER TERM DATES

March 24th, 31st
(No rehearsal 17th)

April 14th, 21st, 28th
(No rehearsal 7th, Holy Week)

May 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

June 2nd, 9th

Aesop's Fable (Chilcott)
Birthday Madrigals (Rutter) &
Songs & Sonnets (Shearing)
Sat 13th June, 7.30pm
Cley Parish Church