

EBC Chairman's Report for years commencing September 2019–July 2022

Prepared with the invaluable assistance of Lyn Scofield

East Bridge Chorale began by learning and performing Faure's Requiem in the summer of 2009. In June 2019 we started rehearsals for our 10 year anniversary concert featuring Mozart's Solemn Mass in C and his Requiem. For that performance the chorale expanded to include many excellent singers from other choral groups which do not meet in the summer. Piano accompaniment for rehearsals was provided brilliantly by Helen Crayford.

The Concert in Colyer-Fergusson Hall on August 31, 2019, supported by an excellent orchestra, was well attended and enthusiastically received. Soloists for the Solemn Mass were Catherine De Ville, Sophie Meikle, Rob Dennis, and Peter Ellis

Our brilliant conductor, Benedict Preece, thanked the committee and especially Geraldine for their hard work in organizing and keeping the choir going. He also commented on how the choir had grown from a small group of about 20 to its present size, the diverse music we performed, and his aim to encourage the enjoyment of making music. Following the Performance Ben sent the following comments to the Chorale:

'What an exhilarating performance!! A fitting way to celebrate our 10th year, it was probably the best performance we've put together in all that time. Many of the technical elements we've been focusing on in the last two months were really coming to fruition. The comments I had from musicians in the audience or in the orchestra were overwhelmingly positive about our sound, and tuning in particular. This is a nice reflection of the work we've done on support and sound production. This is something we can continue to build on and look forward to more fantastic concerts in the future! '

Rehearsals for the next concert, presenting Vivaldi's 'Gloria and Haydn's Paukenmesse: 'Mass in a Time of War" (though the lively melodies and rhythms belied the grim title) resumed on September 20, and the concert took place on November 24th. It was performed in St Mary's Arts Centre, Sandwich at the earlier than usual time of 6.00 pm. Soloists were Sally-Ann Hanson and Christina Bosanko, Sopranos; Jane Kendal and Sophie Meikle (Altos); Peter Ellis (tenor), and Rob Dennis (Bass). The beautiful solos were played by Jane Walker (Oboe) and Julie Peat (Cello).

An audience of about 90 people braved the cold, and expressed their appreciation. Refreshments were supplied by choir members.

On December 15, there was a full house for our Christmas concert with the Sandwich Concert Band, followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

On January 24 we began rehearsals for Hummel's Mass in B flat Major, along with Mozart's Ave Verum and Laudate Dominum, and Joseph Eybler's 'Omnes de Saba Venient'.

Our last EBC raffle was held on February 7. Annette Walter announced that over the years we had raised over £1400 through raffles.

Then came COVID. The planned March concert had to be cancelled.

About 40 of us assembled for a day of singing in the St Mary's Arts Centre in Sandwich in August 2020.

A further break followed till the summer of 2021, when some members of the chorale enjoyed rehearsing Faure's Requiem in Ickham Church, the third time we had sung it.

Ickham Church was again the venue for rehearsals for our first public concert in nearly two years. Some 50 members of the chorale braved the cold and socially distanced spaces in the church to rehearse a wide-ranging selection of short pieces. These included Palestrina's Sicut Corvus, Orlando Gibbons 'The Record of John' and works by Bach, Mozart, Handel, and Elgar. The concert was held in St Nicholas Church, Goodnestone, on November 13, 2021.

The Christmas Concert was held on December 10, 2021, and raised £443.53 for Porchlight

Rehearsals for Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle' were held in Ickham Church beginning January 14, 2021. For the concert in Goodnestone Church on March 13, the choir was accompanied brilliantly by Helen Crayford (piano) and Graham Titus (Harmonium). The soloists were Catherine Fitcher (soprano), Sophie Meikle (alto), Peter Ellis (tenor), and David Pierson (bass). A call for donations to the Disasters Emergency Appeal working in Ukraine raised £1200.

In May, we were able to move back into the Littlebourne Memorial Hall to rehearse several pieces for the Evensong, held on June 12 in St Mary's Church, Wingham. We had a good congregation in attendance and we all enjoyed the full evensong performance, enhanced by Benedict as cantor, together with soloists Christina Bosanko, Jane Kendal, Harry Stracham and David Pierson in the Anthem 'Hear My Words Ye People' by Herbert Parry. Guy Steed was the excellent organist.

I sincerely wish to thank all the committee members for their support throughout the last 3 years; each one for their separate tasks. Special mention must go to Helen Abbott, a very able treasurer, and Mary Rudge our membership secretary,

keeping us all in touch by email. Without them the choir we love might have folded, however the main reason we all love our choir is the unfailing support and enthusiasm from Benedict Preece, our Musical Director, who makes every rehearsal informative and fun. We have excellent accompaniment by Helen Crayford, when necessary, enabling us to produce professional quality public performances with orchestras. We value our association with Caritas who often provide us with our soloists.

Committee Members

The following have volunteered to stand for re-election or election to the positions shown:

Geraldine Wyant – Chairman; standing down as Chairman but to be adopted as President

Helen Abbott – Treasurer

Kate Page – Joint Librarian

Annette Walter – Committee Member (Refreshments and Raffles)

David Sadtler – Committee Member; standing down, but still a loyal friend and valued bass

Mary Rudge – Joint Chairman, Register Co-ordinator, Membership Secretary

Sally Godsel – Committee Member (Refreshments Assistant)

Jane Kendal – Committee Member and Caritas Member

Lucy Rushbrooke – Joint Chairman, Publicity Officer

Peter Lansley – Joint Librarian

Heartfelt thanks go to Mary Rudge and Lucy Rushbrooke for agreeing to take on the shared role of Chairmen on top of their existing duties. I think you are in safe hands.

As ever, very much appreciation is extended to Tony Garrett for managing our website and formatting our beautiful posters and programmes, often only receiving the information at the last minute. Also, to Valerie Bostock for housing our printer and producing copies of programmes, posters etc., also often at short notice.

With love and thanks to you all,

Geraldine