

2018 February

BEXHILL CHORAL SOCIETY

In October we held a fund-raising Quiz evening, which is popular and was well-attended.

In December we had our usual concert of Christmas music and carols, accompanied by a brass ensemble. We had a large and enthusiastic audience, and had a very good review from Brian Hick of Lark Reviews who described it as a 'wonderful evening...which brimmed over with good things'. This was a particular triumph as a number of people had had to pull out at the last minute because of illness, and the bass section in particular was very depleted.

Our next concert is the Brahms *Requiem* (in English) with orchestra, on 12th May at the De La Warr Pavilion.

2018 February

CONCENTUS

Our Christmas term started on September 4th and we had 15 new members start with us.

Our term has been busy with the following activities/events:

Friday 6th October

Performed at St Wilfred's Charity Concert, Hippodrome Theatre, Eastbourne

Wednesday 8th November

We took over 50 choir members with friends and family to see Christmas Spectacular at Thursford, Norfolk.

Particular member benefit was gained in watching/listening to the attention to detail and techniques used in the close harmony singing being displayed by the 120 strong resident professional choir

Saturday 2nd December

Performed at Seaford Christmas Magic, Seaford. We sang for 40 minutes on a stage in the main shopping area of Broad Street entertaining those attending the Christmas stalls and attractions. A very good public attendance.

Saturday 9th December

Performed the first of our annual Christmas Concerts in St Leonard's Church, Seaford to a packed audience who required additional seating. We achieved a door collection of circa £300 for our chosen charity the JPK Project

Sunday 10th December

Sang carols in Arndale Shopping Centre (opposite 'Shades' seating area) for 90 mins to an ever changing audience which included children participation with the opportunity to 'conduct' the choir!

Saturday 16th December

Performed the second of our annual Christmas Concerts in St Saviour's, Eastbourne, again to a packed audience requiring additional seating. We achieved a door collection in excess of £1,150 for the JPK Project

Monday 18th December

Sang carols round the local streets of Old Town for 90 mins with a Santa and Elf on the most amazing sleigh provided by the Bexhill 100 team! We achieved a door/street collection in excess of £200 for the JPK Project. Carol singing in the Lamb Pub and Spice Garden Indian restaurant added an enjoyable and lucrative dimension! A very enjoyable choir social event followed at the JPK Centre

Monday 8th January

Our Summer term started well in our new rehearsal venue being the JPK Centre, Church Street, Eastbourne as the URC on Upperton Road has closed down for demolition and redevelopment. The choir have settled in very well in the new environment, welcoming 12 new prospective members with another 3 coming along next Monday.

2018 February CENTRAL METHODIST

Please accept my apologies for absence from the Meeting next Saturday. Nothing to report from the former Central Methodist Church except to say that our amalgamation with the other churches is now in place and we have become Emmanuel Church (two Methodist and two United Reformed). Pevensey Road premises are now vacated.

Future membership of EDCA to be considered in the light of our permanent re-establishment in new buildings in some two years time.

Meantime I hope that we can keep in touch.

2018 February DOWNLAND SINGERS

Membership has remained stable but we still lack numbers in the Bass section.

Our annual Christmas Gala at Trinity Church was the best to date with a full band, choir and audience – the church was at capacity and there was plenty of festive music for all to enjoy!

Two new venues were added to our usual Christmas programme. The first being the King's Centre where we sang carols and festive songs at the Chestnut Tree House Children's Christmas party, Secondly we enjoyed the wonderful surroundings of All Saint's Hospital Chapel for the Christmas Concert run by Ivy House, Eastbourne.

Both performances went well and were much appreciated. It was gratifying to hear that while singing at the Chestnut Tree House party, one child with autism was able to engage with the live music and this has led to its use as a means of communication with him.

Our next performance will be on Maundy Thursday at Trinity Church for a service of Music and Readings for Holy Week.

2018 February EASTBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

ECS had a busy December starting with a performance of Haydn Seasons. It had been a challenging term learning this fairly long piece, but the performance, with a superb orchestra and lovely soloists, was very enjoyable and rewarding for those taking part and was enthusiastically received by the audience in All Saints' church.

This was followed a week later by a charity carol concert also at All Saints' church. This concert was the first of many carol events for the choir in several different venues - Carol singing in the Arndale Centre, Asda, a care home, an hotel and our annual engagement at All Saints' church to lead their lunch time carol service.

This term we have started work on Vaughan Williams Sea Symphony for our concert on 24th March and held an enjoyable workshop for this on Jan 29th. So far we are finding the piece challenging but agree it is a fantastic piece.

2018 February EASTBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CHORUS

Report really only to mention that we had a successful Brahms' Requiem concert in March 2017. The ESO are doing a non-choral concert for spring 2018 (details on www.eso.org.uk) and are planning a choral concert on Sunday 17 March 2019

2018 February HAILSHAM CHORAL

Our Autumn concert in November was Brahms German Requiem, sung in German and accompanied by Will Hancox and our own Colin Hughes on piano and keyboard. There had been worries in the choir about singing in German, which seemed strange, as we have sung in many languages, including Russian and Hebrew, in the past. However, Jozik did an amazing job rehearsing us and the concert was a great success and everybody, singers and audience, enjoyed it. As it was Armistice Day we also sang 'For the Fallen' by Douglas Guest and Will and Colin played the beautiful Rachmaninov Romance from his Suite for Two Pianos.

Hard on the heels of the Autumn Concert came our Christmas concert, with our Assistant MD, Barbara Edwards, working miracles to prepare us in time. This year we had decided to sing in the Hailsham Parish Church, rather than our usual venue of the Community Hall, and this was a great idea, as the church was much more atmospheric and intimate, and we had more people in the audience than in previous Christmas concerts. We always support a charity at these concerts, and this year we had chosen the charity Brian Maskell had been involved in, the Orpheus Centre, which helps disabled young adults become independent through music and the performing arts. A young student from Orpheus sang at the concert – she had an amazing voice and it was incredibly moving.

We also took part in the Hailsham Christmas Market and sang carols on what was a lovely sunny December day.

We are now building on what we've learned for the Brahms by singing the wonderful St John's Passion by Bach on 17 March at All Saints. We will be accompanied by The Sussex Baroque Players led by Julia Bishop and we have six fantastic soloists: Nick Pritchard, John Hancorn, Bethany Partridge, Rebecca Leggett, Paul Austin Kelly and Daniel Jordan. This promises to be a very special event.

2018 February HEATHFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY

Our main concert was a December performance of Messiah by Candlelight, which drew our largest audience ever, partly because we didn't stop the online sales when we reached what we planned to be our maximum! Never mind, we borrowed extra seating from two other venues and somehow squeezed ourselves into the hall: still keeping to the fire regulations of course.

In mid November we had no other commitments, but within a week, we have been approached by four organisations to ask if we could sing carols at their events, from the lowly Heathfield Christmas Shopping Day, to the rather more formal reception for East Sussex Councillors and Officers. A strange one this: singing from a balcony to a large group who were clearly more interested in canapes and networking than listening to Ding Dong for the umpteenth time. Still, I think we provided an adequate background muzak!

We are now rehearsing for our concerts in May and November: a rather different repertoire than our recent classical concerts, with Rutter's 'Sprig of Thyme', Spirituals and a selection from Les Mis. We are sharing this concert with Heathfield Youth Drama, as a means of broadening our audience and involvement with the local community.

Then in November, we have a major concert to make the centenary of the Armistice, which includes the

performance of a new work: Voices of Remembrance by Laura Rossi.

Numbers are holding up well, and some of our singers have joined forces for specific concerts with other choirs, which is a great compliment and is truly within the spirit of the association.

2018 February PHOENIX CHOIR

There's little to report yet on this occasion. We're nearing our concert date for the St. Matthew Passion on 17th February. We have had several new members join us for this programme but had hoped for more. Singing in German is a very controversial decision it seems when deciding how to go about a piece even though choral singers regularly sing in Latin, French etc. Rehearsals have gone well, despite the German and our numbers, but we're very aware of the number of illnesses/ bugs going round and I always open my inbox with slight trepidation as we near a concert in case another has been struck down. We've had a number of altos pull out for health/ medical reasons which has been a worry. The tenors – or lack of them – continue to be a problem and we have bought in the services of two tenors to give the section a much needed boost. Our sponsored charity for this year is Medical Detection dogs and we have Ralph - a Labrador with a diabetic owner attending the concert so we are likely to be upstaged in any case!

We had several enquiries in the New Year from prospective members but it was too late to join so late in rehearsals. I hope they'll still be interested at the start of next season's rehearsals.

We did the usual round of carol singing in December and are pleased to have some bookings for next year already.

For our summer concert we're singing Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle which will offer some fun and light relief after this season as well as being a low budget concert. Marvellous!

2018 February SEAFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Autumn 2017 brought with it a few challenges for the new committee. In November our much loved accompanist, Nick Milner-Gulland died. We managed to continue with the help of a number of people who stepped in for the evening, including Colin Hughes and John Eady. Colin also conducted us for a short slot when our conductor was late. He lit the room up.

Colin accompanied us at the Autumn concert, which was a greater success than expected. Most of the singers had felt under-rehearsed and anxious but it came together on the night and we made a pretty good sound with Nelson mass, and really surprised ourselves in Chilcott's Little Jazz Mass. Though it went well it did highlight the importance of us all enjoying our weekly sing as well as preparing for a concert.

In December our MD resigned, leaving us without an MD or accompanist as the Christmas holidays began. I am utterly delighted to report that Colin Hughes agreed to take over as our MD and John Eady as our accompanist. They have now presided over four rehearsals and the effect has been amazing. We are buzzing. There is a new excitement and singers have a constant smile on their faces. Colin is a fantastic MD and John is unbelievable on the piano. People gaze in amazement. The word is getting around Seaford very quickly and singers are returning.

We are rehearsing Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise for our Spring concert on 24 March, along with Locus iste and Haydn's Insanae et Vanae Curae, which we are dedicating to the memory of our lovely accompanist, Nick. Rehearsals going well. On 17 February we are having a workshop (09:30 to 15:00) at Seaford Baptist Church. It will give us time to concentrate on singing technique etc. Colin will lead the workshop. We will also spend a little time preparing for our "Almost Instant" Good Friday offering of Fauré's Requiem. We have decided, by popular demand, to continue with these concerts but restricting ourselves to three set pieces that will rotate (Fauré, bits for Messiah and Stainer Crucifixion). We will have a busy week with our Spring concert on 24 March and the requiem on the following Friday. *Singers who know Fauré well are most welcome to join us on Good Friday. We will have a rehearsal on Monday 26 March at 19:15 and another on Friday afternoon. You are also welcome to join us for the workshop on 17 Feb.*

With Colin we have inherited his partner, Rebecca Anstey who is one of our very popular soloists. Rebecca has led a session with us on breathing technique, and will be taking more sessions. She is well-loved by the singers and a great asset.

The Baptist Church in Seaford is a great venue for less-formal concerts, seating at least 250 people in a flexible space. We have booked it for our Summer concert on 30 June.

Seaford Choral Society is in a good place and looking forward to the future. We have around 80 members now, and are not looking to greatly increase our numbers except by attracting some good younger singers.

2018 February

SOUTH DOWNS SINGERS

Just to say that we have attracted a lot of younger members over the last few months, which is very refreshing for us all. We are now a choir of 58.

We enjoyed an excellent Christmas concert with The Warbleton Brass Band, which was very well received. We raised £1350 for our chosen charity Children with Cancer.

Our next concert is April 21st at St John's, where I am delighted to say we are being joined by some of Bede's senior school. Our charity for this concert is CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young)

We are also having a work shop again this April with Ruth Kerr...

Our proposed dates for 2019 are Saturday 25th April St John's
Saturday 29th June venue TBC
Saturday 7th December 2019

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