

Autumn 2011 NEWSLETTER

Our Organisation:

The new Season got off to a brisk start on September 5th with the rare combination of an EGM and AGM on the same evening.

- **Elections:**

At the AGM the following new Officers and Committee Members were elected to vacant posts. We welcome them in their new roles and thank them for their willingness to serve:

- Vice-Chair: Guy Huntrods
- *Making Music* Rep: Trevor Hurrell
- Members of Committee: Diana Blower
Margaret Butcher
Jean Finch

In addition we are grateful to Clive Steward for accepting co-option to the Committee as Acting Librarian, and for "holding the fort" temporarily. Diana Blower has now kindly offered to take over this role – and we thank her most warmly for doing so.

The remaining Officers, having presented themselves for re-election, remain unchanged.

- **Line Representatives:**

Finally please note that there have been a few changes in the names of our Line Representatives too: our thanks, as always, to both new and existing Line Representatives for the contribution they make to the smooth running of the Society. The up-to-date list is as follows:

- Soprano section: Diana Blower
Barbara Maw
- Alto section: Shirley Morgan
Pauline Coxshall
- Tenor Section: Alan Spencer
- Bass Section: Clive Steward

Musical Direction:

- The Committee has not wished to make a rushed decision on the engagement of a new permanent Musical Director, preferring to give careful thought/discussion to what the longer term objectives of the Society should be, and what qualities would be called for in the candidate who can best help us achieve them.

- The Committee will be engaging in this reflection during the autumn, in preparation for the launch of the recruitment of a new permanent MD in January 2012, with a view to an appointment from September 2012.
- The Committee feels that to engage different “guest” conductors for the current 2011/2012 season – as well as giving us the required breathing space before selecting our next MD – will be a refreshing and rewarding opportunity for us to be exposed to different styles and approaches singing.
 - We have been rehearsing *Elijah* since the start of the season under the direction of Malcolm Riley, whose comfortable and inspiring approach has been appreciated by everyone. We have been delighted to have you among us, Malcolm, and bid you a very warm welcome.
 - For our traditional Christmas Concert in Goudhurst we are delighted to report that Roland Millar will be rehearsing and conducting us, and look forward eagerly to our first session with him on November 14th [see below for important dates/details].
 - We have already begun discussions with several candidates for the other major concerts of this season [*Carmina Burana* in March and Verdi’s *Requiem* in May], and we are confident that members will have the chance to sing under yet more outstanding and interesting musicians on these occasions.

Important dates from now till Christmas:

- **The *Elijah* Concert: Saturday November 12th at 7.00pm – Assembly Hall Theatre:**
 - **Extra rehearsal:** November 11th at St John’s Church [not the Hall] at 7.30pm
 - **Dress rehearsal:** November 12th at Assembly Hall Theatre 2.00pm to c. 4.45pm
 - Members are asked to arrive in time to take their places and be ready to sing by 2.00pm sharp.
 - **Dress code:**
 - *Ladies:* black skirts or trousers, black long-sleeved or ¾ sleeve tops: jewellery, if worn, to be unobtrusive.
 - *Men:* dinner jackets or dark lounge suits, black bow tie, white shirts.
 - Members are also asked to wear Remembrance poppies as usual for this event.
 - **Volunteers** are needed, please, to sell programmes and to help with liaison. Ideally this would be non-singing members, or friends/family members willing to help out. Please give names to Jane Reed or Trevor Hurrell. We will show our appreciation our “helpers” by offering them complementary tickets for the Concert
 - **Return of scores:**
 - Would all singers please return their music to the Clive Steward/Diana Blower without fail on the 12th at the end of the performance?
 - Would any member NOT singing in the Concert please return their scores to him/her before the day of the Concert?

- **Christmas Concert: Sunday December 11th at 6.30pm – St Mary’s Church Goudhurst:**

- Rehearsals will start on the Monday after the *Elijah* concert – Monday 14th November
 - **Extra rehearsal:** December 9th at Vale Royal Methodist Church at 7.30pm
 - **Dress rehearsal:** December 11th at St Mary's Church at approx 3.30 [to be confirmed]
 - **Dress code:**
 - *Ladies:* black skirts or trousers, black or red long-sleeved or ¾ sleeve tops: jewellery, if worn, to be unobtrusive.
 - *Men:* dinner jackets or dark lounge suits, black or red bow tie, white shirts.
 - **Volunteers** are needed to prepare the Church for the performance: those who are willing to help are asked to be available 45 minutes before the rehearsal. We also need 6 or so volunteers for ticket and programme selling.
 - **Refreshments** will be served in the village hall after the rehearsal – and here too Jill Dunstall would be grateful for offers of assistance.
- **Traditional Carol Singing at Rosset Holt and Halliwell Residential Homes:**
 - Helen MacNab has kindly offered once again to arrange this event: details are as follows:
 - Monday December 12th 2011.
 - Meet 6.20pm at *Rosset Holt* : then sing from 6.30 -- 7pm.
 - Move on to *Halliwell*: then sing from 7.30 -- 8.15pm (approx). Followed by coffee and mince pies.
 - As in recent years we may start by singing for our President, Roy Douglas, at around 5.30pm but this will be confirmed nearer the date.
 - Will members wishing to take part, or needing more information, please contact Helen.

Looking further ahead to 2012:

- **New Year Dinner:**
 - This will take place as usual towards the end of January 2012: date and venue will be announced as soon as possible, and booking slips made available at that time.
- **Spring Concert: *Carmina Burana*: Sunday March 11th at 3.00pm - Assembly Hall Theatre:**
 - Rehearsals will begin when we resume after the Christmas break on January 9th 2012
- **Summer Concert: *Verdi's Requiem*: Saturday May 19th at 7.00pm – Assembly Hall Theatre:**
 - As already announced, the plan to join forces for this concert with our twin-choir from Wiesbaden has been postponed to a future season.
 - However we are arranging to combine forces with other local groups to ensure that our ranks are big enough to justice to this towering work.
- **Autumn 2012 Concert: Programme to be announced: Sunday November 11th 2012 at 3.00pm – Assembly Hall Theatre.**

Ticket Sales and Publicity:

- The date of our *Elijah* concert is now only 4 weeks away. Staging such a concert with a full orchestra and professional soloists involves considerable expense. So we need all members' support and help in doing everything you can to ensure a large audience.
- Our target over the years has been to hope that each member will be able to sell at least four tickets each for each concert - to friends, family, neighbours, work colleagues etc. As an alternative, some members may feel able to offer a donation equivalent to the price of several tickets.
- Please spread the word and display and distribute flyers, leaflets, and posters as widely as possible wherever you can.
- Our Chairman has promised a bottle of wine to the member who buys the most tickets!

Subscriptions:

- The Treasurer appeals to everyone to please remember to pay their subscription for the new season, and to consider completing a *gift aid* declaration form: this enables the Society to reclaim tax from HMRC, thus increasing the value to the Society of your subscription at no additional cost to yourself.
- **Reminder:**
 - The full annual subscription remains at £90, but members have the option of paying their subscription in two £45 instalments if they find this more convenient (October and January).
 - For members joining for only a part year (e.g. in January) this figure is reduced to £45.
 - For members aged under 25 the annual subscription is reduced to just £25.
- **A wizard wheeze to save money!!**
 - Gerald Chew – our Committee Member responsible for *Friends and Patrons* – asks me to draw members' attention to a money-saving "special offer" he has devised. Here is what he puts before you:
 - Many of you have a friend or spouse who regularly attends our concerts.
 - If they became Friend [£55 per annum] or Patron [£100 per annum] they would be entitled to one best-seat ticket for every programme throughout the season, which would otherwise cost about £65.
 - Moreover, if you, as a singing member, were to become a Friend, you could pass on your free tickets to your spouse or a friend. Several of our members already do this.
 - If you have already purchased a ticket for *Elijah* it's not too late to ask for a discount for the amount already paid.
 - It's one of those magic wheezes where both you and the Society benefit, so please spare a few minutes to talk to Gerald Chew who would be delighted to tell you more.

OTHER MATTERS:

- **New candidates for Office required:** Your urgent attention is drawn to the need to find candidates for several posts which are now falling vacant:

- **Concert Secretary:** Jane Reed has decided to take up the opportunity of a new job in Jersey in the spring of 2012. The appointment of a successor is therefore an extremely urgent matter and we ask Members to reflect on whether they could offer their own services, or encourage another member to do so. Jane has suggested that potential candidates should be ready to help out with *Elijah* or with the Christmas concert [*Elijah* is probably the better one] in order to get a flavour of what it's like to work with orchestral players.

- **Publicity Manager:** Gareth told us last year that he intended to step down at the end of this season, and we are still looking for volunteers to take over this very important role.

- **Treasurer:** Michael Selway had announced as long ago as 2009 that he wished to step down at the end of the 2010/2011 Season. We are most grateful to him for deferring his departure for 12 months to help deal with events over the summer, but he must be replaced in the near future as he will definitely have to bow out next summer.

Each of these posts is falling vacant imminently. For a successful transition of responsibilities, new Officers will need to be able to “shadow” the present incumbents for at least the January to June 2102 period, and in the case of the **Concert Secretary** even sooner. We cannot emphasise enough how vital it is that members step up to the plate and accept a share of the responsibility and work that enables us all to enjoy singing together so much. We have been appealing for candidates for some time now, without yet being able to fill these posts, and unless they are filled the Society cannot function

- **Raffle:**

- We are very grateful to Jean Finch and Margaret Butcher, who run our raffle each Monday throughout the Season.

- This is a valuable source of income, helping us to put on more ambitious concerts and to keep subscriptions from increasing. Please do support them in helping the Society - by buying some tickets whenever you find you have change weighing down your purse or pocket, and by donating any suitable unwanted gifts etc to add to the prizes.

- **Latest news of other events:**

- As at each of the last 2 Christmas's we have again been invited to sing Carols at the *Hotel du Vin* on Christmas Eve [*and to enjoy their sparkling wine and Mince Pies afterwards!*]

- Members interested in taking part are asked to contact Trevor Hurrell

- We have also been offered an opportunity to sing in *Royal Victoria Place* in the run-up to Christmas.

- The date will be December 17th, and the time will be announced shortly
- There will be an upper limit of 12 voices, and we will be asked to collect for a local charity of our choosing:
 - If any participant cares to suggest which charity we might support, please let us know.
 - Members interested in taking part – or in wielding collection boxes – are invited to contact Guy Huntrods.