



# FRIENDS NEWS



Issue 2 February 2018

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I wonder how many of you reading this note were introduced to 'Alexa' over Christmas? It was my first experience of being able to request an inanimate object to come to life and play me various radio stations as well as keeping me up to date with the sports news! Why I ask is that, having become emboldened with my scope of questioning, I asked 'Alexa' to play me some music by Harrogate Choral Society (not for a moment expecting anything other than 'I don't have anything for that' in reply). Lo and behold, on came a recording of the Halleluiah chorus! I've no idea how this was possible (it was organ-accompanied) nor where the recording could have come from, so if any of you can solve the mystery I would be delighted to know the answer.

As most of you know, we have now entered our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year and have a full programme of concerts which are listed elsewhere. In addition we have been invited to take part in a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert celebrating the re-opening of the Royal Hall after its restoration to which its Patron has been invited. He may or may not be able to attend but it is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> November and plans are in progress as you read this.

So, with our President joining us in October on the occasion of his thirtieth year in that role, we have a truly celebratory year in front of us and I do hope that you will be able to join us for as many as possible of the exciting performances to come.

I hope that you will find this, our second edition of the Friends News, to be of interest and we really would appreciate some help with articles for input into the next edition – there must be something that you can tell us about (even your 'Alexa Experiences'!).

Peter Thompson

## Happy Anniversary



ANNIVERSARY

This is the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year for Harrogate Choral Society and we are considering the possibility of holding a celebratory Anniversary Dinner with possible Ceilidh to which all Friends, Patrons, Life Members and Members will be invited. The date has still to be agreed so watch out for more information by post or email. We will be forming a small team to organise the event and if you would like to be involved please let the choir secretary Ruth Pridmore know. We are also having a little birthday party across the road in the St George Hotel after the Elijah concert on 10<sup>th</sup> March so if you are at the concert you are welcome to attend, please get in contact with Ruth so we know how many people to expect.

## SINGING AT HAREWOOD

Back in the Autumn we had a lovely invitation from Harewood House. They were re-introducing their “Victorian Christmas” event and wanted some carol singers. There wasn’t room for the whole of HCS choir so a small choir, comprising Beati, the Halcyon Singers,



plus two Tenors and two Bases, rehearsed with our Deputy Music Director Marilynne Davies and sang together to represent the Society, accompanied by the ever talented Beryl Pankhurst.

They all did us very proud indeed. The setting of the Long Gallery, in all its decorated Christmas glory, for the first of the two sessions, was truly beautiful.



The second session took place outside in the Courtyard where the wonderful sound of carols drifted through the grounds, very moving!

We were very well received by both staff and visitors, and hope that this lovely occasion will be the start of a lasting relationship between Harewood and the HCS.



Here are a couple more photos! – Beryl playing away despite her cold fingers!



and bass Paul with alto Emma – busy giving out leaflets and showing off our new display banners.



## REVIEW OF MESSIAH

When the last newsletter went out we had just started our Messiah rehearsals. So just in case you missed the review in the paper here it is – accompanied by a photo of us on stage, waiting to sing.



The performance of Handel's Messiah by Harrogate Choral Society is, for many people the beginning of Christmas in Harrogate and it must have been very gratifying for the performers, orchestra, singers, soloists and conductor to perform to an almost full Royal Hall. Equally gratifying was the standard of performance the singers and players gave to the audience.

It was quite splendid with four excellent soloists, Bibi Heal, soprano, who sang with great breadth of tone and sensitivity both in the recitatives and her solos. 'How beautiful are the feet' and 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' were sung with almost heart-stopping beauty and with graceful phrasing and dynamic. Emma Watkinson, Mezzo Soprano, sang 'But who may abide', 'O Thou that tellest' and 'He was despised' with well-shaped and impressive drama, her voice full of well-controlled tone and delivered with musical excellence.

Luke Wilkinson, Tenor sang with a warm and rich voice delivering 'Comfort ye' with great musical comfort and 'Every valley' with wonderful vitality. This was confident singing which became even more convincing after the interval. Stuart Orme, Baritone was impressively persuasive in 'Thus saith the Lord' and 'For behold. Behold, I tell you a mystery' and 'The trumpet shall sound' demonstrated an commanding excellence of his art.

Manchester Camerata which accompanied this performance were superb. Playing with sheer excellence, it showed a unanimity of musical thought which pervaded every part of this work. The phrasing was delicate and the cadences beautifully shaped. Andrew Padmore conducted with amazing energy, driving the choruses along at brisk tempo.

The Choral Society were simply wonderful, dancing along the semiquavers with such ease and yet controlling the quieter passage with great control and feeling. This was an absolutely splendid and impressive Messiah of which the Conductor and performers should be very proud.

*Adrian Selway*

## COMMITTEE REPORT

The following is a summary of items discussed at the meeting held on 29 January 2018

### Budgets

Both the Opera concert and Messiah had better ticket sales than expected. The Harrogate Christmas concert was also well attended. We need an audience of about 450 to achieve the smallish budgeted loss for Elijah.

### Concert Planning

Plans for future seasons are underway and include The Magic of Mozart on 20<sup>th</sup> October conducted by Brian Kay, Messiah on 8<sup>th</sup> December, Haydn Creation on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2019 (all in the Royal Hall) and a concert in Ripon Cathedral on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2019. There will also be an additional performance of Messiah at St Aidans in Leeds which will replace the normal Friday night before the concert rehearsal.

### Membership Matters

We have received 6 new member enquiries from the new website, all ladies, and after Elijah will be launching a recruitment campaign aimed at tenors and basses.

### Marketing & Publicity

The new website was launched, it still needs further development in terms of history of the choir and other information, we have an archive but may need help sorting through it to find the useful information! We may be losing the hospital railings site for banners so choir members are to be asked if they can think of anywhere on the main roads of Harrogate where we could display them.

### Halcyon and Beati

Sadly A levels are taking their toll on Halcyon numbers – there are now only 4 young singers, though of course new members would be most welcome.

### 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

It was agreed we should celebrate our anniversary with a dinner -with possible ceilidh, and also to have a celebratory party after the Elijah concert.

## PLANNED CONCERT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Season	Date	Venue	Works
2017-2018	10 March 18	Royal Hall	Mendelssohn – Elijah Celebrating 70 years of HCS
	9 June 18	St Wilfrid's Church	A Nightingale Sang Music composed by / loved by Americans
2018-2019	20 Oct 18	Royal Hall	The Magic of Mozart (incl 'Requiem') Conducted by Brian Kay
	7 Dec 18	St Aidans Leeds	Handel - Messiah
	8 Dec 18	Royal Hall	Handel – Messiah
	15 Dec 18	Harrogate Convention Centre	The Harrogate Christmas Concert
	23 March 19	Royal Hall	Haydn – Creation
	7 June 19	Ripon Cathedral	

## HCS HELPING OTHERS

We have continued our Anniversary pledge – made at our committee meeting in July - to pass on some of our good fortune and offer support to some local charities by donating £1 for each ticket sold to a charity per concert and also working with them on publicity to help raise awareness of what they do for the local community. Each charity will also be able to hold a bucket collection at the end of their concert and use the interval to raise awareness / hold tombolas etc etc.

At a rehearsal in early January our Chairman Peter Thompson presented a cheque for £600 from the Messiah concert to Frances Eliot from HELP who were the nominated charity for the concert.

HELP (Harrogate Easier Living Project), which is part of HARCVS (Harrogate and Ripon Centres for Voluntary Service) provides a wide range of services to elderly and vulnerable people in the Harrogate District, including a volunteer driver service for appointments and meetings – and even concerts! (<http://www.helpharrogate.org.uk> )



The Charity for Elijah is a local group called Our Angels who are a registered charity with three overarching purposes - to provide comfort and support to families who have suffered an early pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or neonatal death; to work in partnership with health professionals to ensure that bereaved parents and families receive the best possible care and support; and to raise awareness of the tragedy of baby loss and to promote research and activity that could help to reduce this. We are looking forward to working with them.



## This Newsletter

Just a reminder that if there is more you would like to read in the newsletter then do let us know by getting in touch with Carolyn the Friends Secretary – email [friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk](mailto:friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk) Perhaps a Friend might even like to take over as editor!