



Ashford Choral Society

Celebrating over 160 years

Conductor: Paul Young - Deputy Conductor and Accompanist: Matthew Raisbeck

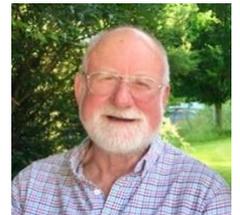
Chairman: Alan Paterson - Secretary: Virginia Brown

Newsletter 5 – November 2019

MEET YOUR COMMITTEE

The Society could not operate without the hundreds of hours of work done by the members of the Committee. Although Ashford Choral is an organisation with a significant turnover in terms of income and expenditure, no remuneration is given except to professional musicians.

The Committee, chaired by Alan Paterson (*photo right*), meets four times a year to plan the future work of the Society and discuss any current issues. Each member of the Committee has specific roles to ensure the continued success of the Society; indeed work starts many months in advance of any concert (Colyer-Fergusson Hall has to be booked at least 18 months prior to any concert), soloists, musicians, music and any special instruments (harps, harpsichords and so on) also need advance booking.



With the retirement of Dr. Mark Deller, the Committee has agreed to elect a Deputy Chairman, Jane Miller (who will continue to handle ticketing and choir score hire), to support Alan Paterson and two further Committee posts have also been created - Fundraiser and Concert Manager. These new posts strengthen and develop what Mark previously integrated into his role.

Dominic Urand (*photo right*)

In order to try and maximise income to the Society, and mitigate subscription increases, the role of Fundraiser has been created and will be filled by Dominic, who has already been researching the fundraising opportunities with various Trusts and Councils. Whilst there are some promising opportunities none are an "instant fix".



Long gone are the days when a simple "begging letter" would suffice - now all funding applications need to be supported by a written proposal and by detailed financial information. Thus, Dominic will be working closely with our Music Director and Treasurer to create detailed budgets for each future concert in order to see what funds are needed for which grants can be sourced. This will mean that our concert programme will need to be planned even further in advance than currently.



Paul Bitcheno (*photo left*)

Paul's role as Concert Manager will involve ordering orchestral parts for ACS concerts and on concert days ensuring everything is set up correctly for the concert. At Colyer-Fergusson Paul will liaise with Sophie Meikle, but for concerts at Ashford and Wye Church Paul will be in sole charge. At Wye and Ashford all seating and staging requirements will be Paul's responsibility, including set up and dismantling. Paul's engineering background and strong organisational skills should prove very useful!

SING LIKE A CHOIR, LOOK LIKE A CHOIR

Just as it is vital to sing as a choir, it is important to look like a choir. The ACS dress code for concerts is thus very simple:

- Ladies should wear long black dresses or long (at least below the knee) skirts or formal trousers (no leggings) with long sleeved black tops or jackets. Please avoid jewellery/clothing likely to sparkle under the lighting and potentially affect the vision of other performers and the audience.
- Gentlemen should wear a black Dress suit, with a white shirt and black bow tie.

CHRISTMAS CAROL CHARITIES

ACS has been singing a carol concert in Ashford Parish Church for many years - we have programmes in our archive showing carol concerts took place even in the midst of World War II.



For over 50 years the concerts have raised money for charities and this year a national and a local charity will be supported by the Carol Concert on Saturday December 21. The national charity will be Marie Curie and the local charity will be the Kent Refugee Action Network.



Marie Curie is a very well-known national charity providing nursing and emotional support for those diagnosed with a terminal illness. Marie Curie fund

over 2,000 nurses working throughout the UK who make it possible for people living with any terminal illness to die at home, surrounded by the people that mean the most to them. The charity also funds nine hospices and trains dedicated Helper Volunteers who spend a few hours a week visiting people with a terminal illness, offering companionship, emotional support and practical help.



The Local charity, Kent Refugee Action Committee, works to help young refugees to learn basic skills that will better integrate them into UK Society. The education provided has been designed to meet the needs of young unaccompanied asylum seekers who have been living in the UK for less than two years. All of the young people will have encountered severe disruption to their normal routines and in addition, there will be significant cultural differences to experience upon arrival in the UK. This necessitates a high adult-learner ratio in order to cater adequately for the diverse needs of the young people and all the teachers are volunteers.



CAROLS AROUND THE COUNTY

In addition to the church carol service, volunteers from Ashford Choral Society will be singing around the Kent countryside to raise funds for charity. This year ACS have been invited to visit four houses in Challock, Westwell, Bilting and Wye on the evening of December 19th.

This evening of roaming carol singing was always led by Mark Deller and this year Paul Young will carry on the tradition.

Valiant singers will stand in the various kitchens or hallways and sing carols - as family dogs source fallen sausage rolls and party goes sip hot punch. These evenings are very special and have always raised a substantial sum to add to the monies collected in Ashford Church - with especial thanks to Jane Miller and Penny Town for their technique with the collecting tins.



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