

# Ashford Choral Society

Founded: 1857

Conductor: Matthew Raisbeck

Chairman Dominic Urand - Secretary : Virginia Brown

Newsletter: September 2024



## ACS AGM, TUES. OCTOBER 8th 2024

The Choral Society's annual general meeting will take place at **8pm on Tuesday October 8th** when committee members will be elected and other matters raised. This is a short meeting but important to the running of the Society, so please stay and support your hardworking committee.

The current committee, and their main roles, are:

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Chairman             | Dominic Urand              |
| • Conductor            | Matthew Raisbeck           |
| • Treasurer            | Tim Whorlow                |
| • Secretary            | Virginia Brown             |
| • Advertising & Raffle | Rachel Cook                |
| • Choir registers      | Mary Waite                 |
| • Concert Manager      | Paul Bitcheno              |
| • Facebook             | Manou Maindron             |
| • Friends' Secretary   | Ellie Bartram              |
| • Music library        | Beryl Walker               |
| • Publicity            | Julia Blackwell            |
| • Score hire & tickets | Jane Miller and Penny Town |

### *Fundraising by committee members*

Dominic and Matthew recently submitted a successful application to the Kent Community Fund for funds towards our November concert. Meanwhile Julia has secured a grant for new Christmas music from Ashford Federation of the Arts. A significant sum was raised by our first ever quiz evening, organised by Manou and Rachel. These efforts enable us to continue to stage high quality concerts with orchestra without having to raise the membership fee still higher.

As a very old Choral Society we are constantly evolving and new ideas and talent are always welcome.

## FUNDRAISING

Small actions make a big financial contribution to the Society – for example each week members have the opportunity to buy wonderful homemade jam, marmalade, cakes and fresh eggs. These are made and brought along by long-term Society members, Ruth Foster (soprano) and Joyce Owen (alto). Last year, together with ACS tote bag sales, the produce stall raised over £600. Please do keep supporting by buying cakes, eggs, marmalade, jam and ACS bags.

In addition, the weekly raffle, run by Rachel Cook (soprano), contributes significantly to Society funds – raising £1130 last year. So please keep buying your weekly tickets. Talk to Rachel if you have items or ideas for raffle prizes. Rachel also welcomes donations so that she can buy suitable items for the raffle. All these things help keep the Society alive for the future.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

From September 2023, to secure the future of the society, we raised the annual subscription to £144. The subscription represents excellent value. Each week we rehearse with a professional accompanist – not a backing tape – and every member has the opportunity to participate in concerts at a very high level, in good venues, with a professional orchestra and soloists.

The annual subscription (under 25s go free) can be paid in one amount or split into monthly or quarterly instalments, provided that some payment is received by 30 September 2024.

Please speak to Tim Whorlow our Treasurer (or email [ashfordchoraltreasurer@zoho.com](mailto:ashfordchoraltreasurer@zoho.com)) should you have any queries or questions regarding your subscription.

Payment by BACs online banking is preferred as this keeps costs down. However payment by cheque or cash is also acceptable.

## GIFT AID

If you are a UK taxpayer, your subscription can provide additional support to the Society at no extra cost to you through the UK Treasury Gift Aid scheme. Please speak to the Treasurer about the form you need to sign to turn your subscription into an eligible Gift Aid donation.

## BECOME A FRIEND

Friends of the Ashford Choral Society play an invaluable role and their annual contribution is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to become a Friend of the Society, please let us know. Yearly contributions start at only £30.

## ACS TOTE BAGS

Don't forget that Ashford Choral Society black tote bags are on sale at rehearsals (only £5 for choir members).

The bags are easy to use for anything - not just carrying scores. They make good Christmas stocking fillers and advertise the choir when you are shopping.

## SUCCESS OF THE FIRST QUIZ NIGHT

The first ever ACS quiz, held at St Mary's Church on May 10th, was open to all. Members of the choir, friends and quiz amateurs came in droves, filling 14 tables of 6. Phil Sibbald was a lively compère, sharing questions and pictures over 9 varied rounds, promoting the raffle and leading a game of heads and tails.



The quiz and the raffle raised over £770 for the choir. Watch this space for the date of the next quiz to be held in spring 2025.



## SINGING WORKSHOP



The 2nd singing workshop, in July, was an opportunity to welcome potential new members and for current members to try a different style of music. This year's theme was opera choruses, with pieces as varied as Dido's Lament and final chorus – Purcell, Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves – Verdi, Humming Chorus – Puccini, Pilgrims' Chorus – Wagner and many more.

## CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT CHARITIES

At our annual carol concert, the retiring collection is divided equally between two chosen charities. This is supplemented by donations raised on an evening of carol singing when a small choir is invited to sing at three or four house parties. Sums raised usually top £1,000. A list of past charities and sums raised can be found on the website.

Suggestions from choir members for the two charities are most welcome. Please let Virginia have your recommended charity by email [secretary@ashfordchoral.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ashfordchoral.org.uk) no later than November 1st.



## WEDDING CHOIR

New members may not know this, but Ashford Choral Society is sometimes asked to provide a choir for a wedding. This brings in useful additional funds for the Society. On September 7th a small choir sang for a charming country wedding at St Mary Magdalene, Ruckinge, whilst Matthew gave the organ a real airing!

On Monday September 16th a much larger choir, joined by members of Wittersham church choir and friends, provided music for the wedding of ACS soprano Rosie Miller.

Rosie, like her sister, Penny Town (alto) before her, was married in the lovely ancient church of St John the Baptist, Wittersham. Rosie was led to the altar by her mother, ACS soprano Jane Miller, accompanied by the choir singing Parry's anthem 'I was glad'.

Other music chosen by Rosie and Gareth, included Parry's 'Blest pair of Sirens' and Rutter's 'The Lord bless you and keep you'. The organ was played by the Wittersham choir master, Giles Ridley, with Matthew keeping the singers under as much control as possible on such a joyful occasion.



## PROGRAMME 2024-25

### November 23rd 2024, Wye Church

- C.P.E. Bach – Magnificat
- Mozart – Coronation Mass

### December 21st 2024, St. Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Willesborough

- Christmas Carol Concert

### March 22nd 2025, St. Mary the Virgin, Willesborough

- Vaughan Williams – Five Mystical Songs

### May 3rd 2025, Colyer-Fergusson Hall, University of Kent, Canterbury

- Poulenc – Gloria
- Beethoven – Mass in C



## HENRY URAND – PARIS PARALYMPIAN

If you think singing the Amen in C.P.E. Bach's Magnificat is a marathon, think of the stamina and breath control needed by Chairman Dominic Urand's son, Henry, who has just returned from participating in the Paris Paralympics with Team GB.

This was the first time Henry had taken part in the Paralympics and he finished fourth in the PTS3 triathlon – one tantalising minute behind the bronze medal winner.

Cheered on by Dominic and his family, Henry swam 750m (in the Seine), cycled 20km, followed by a final 5km run. His timing for the whole event was 1 hr 10 minutes 24 seconds – the bronze winner's time being 1 hr 9 minutes 24 seconds.

Despite only making his paratriathlon debut in 2023, Henry had enjoyed a meteoric rise to qualify for the men's PTS3 race in Paris. He earned his selection with six podium finishes in nine races. His final outing before this summer's games was in Montreal where he won a gold medal at the world triathlon para series.

Henry Urand had already made his mark on the international stage in paratriathlon in his debut season, winning gold at the world triathlon cup in Taranto in 2023. Prior to that he was an accomplished para cyclist and was a part of British Cycling's para-cycling development programme.

What a fantastic achievement! We look forward to seeing what else Henry will achieve in the coming years – Los Angeles 2028??



### Contact :

Email: [info@ashfordchoral.org.uk](mailto:info@ashfordchoral.org.uk)

Telephone: 01233 660559

[www.ashfordchoral.org.uk](http://www.ashfordchoral.org.uk)

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND FACEBOOK PAGE

Our website, [www.ashfordchoral.org.uk](http://www.ashfordchoral.org.uk), is a mine of information on the past and present of one of the oldest choral societies in England. It features the society's history, performances and conductors, as well as advice for members and gives details of the programme of concerts to come.

The society also has an [Ashford Choral Society Facebook](#) page, where you can follow choir updates and easily share upcoming concerts with your friends and family.



Over the summer, several members of the choir, among them Ellie, shared the many reasons why they enjoy singing with ACS.

**Ellie, Soprano**

I have been singing with Ashford Choral Society since 2021, after completing a Music Performance Degree where I was part of the university chamber choir and other ensembles; then the pandemic hit which obliterated a lot of musical opportunities!

I joined ACS to sing in an environment that was relaxed, friendly and had several concerts a year to work towards. I am now part of the committee as Friends Secretary which I enjoy, and look forward each week to our rehearsals.

[www.ashfordchoral.org.uk](http://www.ashfordchoral.org.uk)

## NOVEMBER CONCERT POSTER

From the 8th of October, Julia will bring posters to promote the November concert.

Please help yourselves and share among your friends, family and colleagues.

**ASHFORD CHORAL SOCIETY**  
C.P.E. Bach *Magnificat*  
W.A. Mozart *Coronation Mass*

Ashford Choral Society & Orchestra

Matthew Raisbeck conductor  
Valerie Wong soprano  
Juliet Schiemann mezzo  
William Searle tenor  
Ben Bevan bass

Saturday 23rd November 2024 7.30pm  
Wye Parish Church, High Street,  
Wye TN25 5EJ

Tickets £23 (centre), £16 (sides)  
Phone 07514 709232  
Email [tickets@ashfordchoral.org.uk](mailto:tickets@ashfordchoral.org.uk)  
Buy at Wye Newsagents (opposite Church)  
or on the door

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