



## *Reading Male Voice Choir*



**M**inutes of an annual general meeting held on 7 July 2017 at Hawkedon School, Lower Earley, Reading.

**Present:** Gwyn Arch (GA), president; Steve Richardson (SR), chairman; John Painter (JP), secretary; John Kay (JK), treasurer; Clive Waterman (CW), musical director; and 54 members whose names are listed in Appendix A.

**1. Welcome:** The President first welcomed members to the 2017 AGM. He felt the choir had had a pretty good season and highlighted two outstanding events. The first was the choir's visit to Alsace and the second was a visit to us by the Warsaw MVC; he was sure both would lead to many and long lasting friendships. He then reminded the choir that there is a new development next season as Lucy Morris will be leaving the choir. An outstanding conductor, she has taught members a great deal. We wish her well and hope CW and the committee will find a suitable successor.

**2. Apologies** for absence were received from Dennis Bryant, Ron Curtis, Derek Fowler, Seb Boston, Derek Richings, Bill Andrews, Gavin Roynon, Geoff Crabb, Ray Little and Mike Coulson.

**3. Minutes** of the annual general meeting held on 8 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the president.

**4. Chairman's report on the management of the choir:** SR began his report by saying it had been an eventful year. It began with a very successful trip to Alsace. This was due in no small part to the hard work of Andrew Evans and John Painter. The chairman's abiding memory was of our singing 'Speed Your Journey' as an afterglow song, not realising that this had once been the song of liberation in Italy, and we were soon joined by the Italian choir and then by all the other choirs – around 300 singers in all – a very emotional moment.

SR thanked Dave Ewens for arranging our excellent Christmas Dinner, a trip to see 'The Girls' in London, and a visit to the Hampton Court Flower Show. He then moved on to the next major event for the choir which was the visit from the Harfa MVC from Warsaw. A working party was set up and a very full programme was prepared. Particular thanks go to the hosts without whom the tour could not have taken place, to Artur Stankiewicz who proposed the visit in the first place, and to many others. We are very much looking forward to a return match in due course. SR then thanked many of those who had contributed to a successful season including our musical directors, committee members and choir officers, Ryland for entertaining our audiences, our vital tea and coffee makers and our rafflers with a special thank you to Pat Connell for all the wonderful greenery he brings in as raffle prizes. Finally SR wanted to thank our supporters who add so much to what we do.

**5. Musical directors' reports on artistic and musical matters.** CW first welcomed the president. He then said how lucky we were to have so many dedicated members, with Lucy reinforcing his view

that ours is a very well organised choir with every member playing their part in its success. He felt the past season had been largely stress free and musically rewarding with the choir singing consistently well throughout. Running through the many other choirs with which we sang during the season he started by saying how well he felt we had performed in Alsace, alongside the other international choirs, and this in spite of the visit being held so on early in the season. Other concerts of note were our newly undertaken 'Christmas Concert' at the Minster in Reading, and singing with the Taplow Boys Choir which gave us all an insight into another aspect of Lucy's work, and where we enjoyed once more hearing her beautiful violin playing. Another event of note was our concert at Christchurch where we welcomed our president to play the piano for us, and of course what better way to end a very memorable season than the fantastic visit of the Harfa choir.

CW then turned to the extra special dimension that having Lucy Morris as assistant musical director had provided for the choir over the last two years, her uncompromising enthusiasm, her violin playing, her legendary warm-up sessions and much more besides. She will be greatly missed as she heads out into the wider professional world, but we have high hopes that she might return on occasion to take a rehearsal or make a guest appearance at a concert.

Moving on, CW reminded members that he had been collecting recordings of past seasons' concerts in the hope of being able to put together a new 'RMVC in Concert' CD for sale during the coming season. He has also been working with a small group from the choir committee to find a replacement as deputy musical director, and after a number of disappointments his hopes were currently high.

Describing some of the highlights of the season CW first chose the beauty and reverence of our quiet singing which has created some magical moments. There is also the clarity of our diction and the fun and excitement evidenced in our performance; add to this a dash of the cymbals, with all this rounded off by Ryland's wit and humour and the package is then complete. Another highlight was singing with other choirs as this provides us with a further dimension, challenging us to perform at our very best as well as allowing us to learn by watching and listening to their performance.

Sadly at the end of the season the choir will lose the services of several loyal and dedicated members, CW could not remember a time when Clive Pugh had not been in the ranks encouraging the troops, he has been a tremendous asset to the second tenors, as has Peter Crouch and Ray Sansum. It is truly sad to see these three pillars of the second tenors leave the choir and he wished them well. However, to emphasise the support choir members give to each other when there is a need, offers have already been received from other sections to transfer into the second tenors.

CW then thanked the committee for all their hard work during the season. He also wanted to thank all those who will not allow him struggle with his equipment, either when setting up or putting it away, there are many who help him, but he particularly wanted to thank Tony Rawlins.

In conclusion, CW said that he was looking forward to September and the start of another great season where the sections will revert to their original positions of first tenor, second tenor, baritone and bass. We are being tempted towards Italy or Warsaw, and have another fulfilling programme already mapped out - and who knows, there might even be someone sitting on the stool!

**Lucy Morris message:** Lucy had sent a recorded report. She began by saying how sorry she was not to be with us to celebrate a great year of singing and successful events as she was in Edinburgh working with the national youth choirs of Scotland.

Looking back over the past year she was most interested to see how other European MVC's sang and presented themselves on our visit to Alsace, noting how well presented and smart the RMVC were in comparison. The visit also highlighted what a wonderful range of music we sing and how much new

music we had learned during the year. Some other highlights for her during the year were our Christmas concert at Reading Minster, where she looks forward to seeing us again when she conducts the A440 choir there later this year; our singing with the Taplow Boys Choir, especially the joint items – a wonderful experience for the boys; and singing in a joint concert with Opera at Bearwood and Reddam House School. There were many others too with each concert being special in its own way - altogether a great year.

Lucy went on to say that her decision to leave the choir was not taken lightly. During the two years she had been with us, and as her diary became fuller, she was having to turn down opportunities, and in spite of the generosity of Clive allowing her to miss some rehearsals, felt it was not fair either to him or to the choir to have this level of inconsistency.

The job was perfect for her when she joined. Particular memories she will take with her from her two years with the choir were, conducting all five choirs in Alsace, conducting the Rhythm of Life on stage at the Hexagon and running across the stage to play the piano, GA's celebratory lunch which showed so much love for the choir's founder; but most of all she will remember the good humour in rehearsals and your groans as the warm-ups began. She will treasure the music stand members gave her and will spend the money we collected on something which will advance her career. Finally she was sure her leaving the choir will not unsettle it thanks to Clive who puts so much time and energy into the choir, and this will continue.

**6. Secretary's report:** JP had circulated his report before the meeting. He first of all noted that most of it had already been covered by SR and CW. Of the items remaining he reminded members that we raised just over £11,000 for charity during the season. As well as the concerts we sang at the Bucklebury Beerfest and the Pangbourne WI Christmas party. We have a full programme for next season with the exception of January. Concerts include three return visits to old venues and three to new venues; we are also awaiting dates for a visit to Dervio on Lake Como, Italy in June. There remain a number of people still to thank: firstly Martin Deaves and Kevin Boyle for organising the transport and equipment moves for all of our concerts during the year - these activities are absolutely fundamental to the smooth running of the choir, and also Keith Knee-Robinson and his helpers for organising the CD sales at our concerts. A little further support would be welcome here in the coming season. In addition thanks are due to Andrew Evans and Richard Williams for their promotion of the choir on social media.

**7. Treasurer's report:** JK had sent out two documents to members in advance of the meeting. Firstly 'The Consolidated Report and Accounts' for year ending 31 May 2017, which members will have noticed is set out in a different format than in the past. Secondly 'The Treasurer's Report', which deals with the budget for the year ending 31 May 2018.

**a) Consolidated Report and Accounts 2016/17:** This is a consolidation of three separate documents. The first section is the Trustees Annual Report; the second section is the Receipts and Payments Account; and the third section is a copy of the signed Independent Examiners Report. These are the documents which will be submitted to the Charities Commission following the AGM. Continuing JK told members that the reason we had changed the format of the report this year, is because we have changed the way in which we operate our accounts. Previously we have operated on an accruals basis, but due to increasingly complex regulations we will now be operating our accounts on a cash basis. JK then highlighted that the committee had taken a decision to increase our reserve from £5000 at 2002 prices (now equivalent to approx £7,500) to £10,000 at 2017 prices. This represents about 50% of a normal year's turnover and would provide a sensible sized cushion

should there be a financial emergency. Alan Harland agrees this is a sensible provision.

Looking at the report it appears that the results look slightly worse than the budget approved last year, but JK explained that this would be misleading as it simply reflected the new cash accounting method.

The treasurer then moved that the Consolidated Report and Accounts be adopted. **Approved.**

**b) Budget for year to 31 May 2018:** JK began by pointing out that he was not accounting for any capital expenditure during the season. However there were three items which needed to be taken into account. Firstly the likely net cost of the Harfa visit - £250; the possible production of a new CD - £1000; and also the possible purchase of a trailer (not factored in). In addition no provision had been made for any overseas tour as it is anticipated that should one take place it would be self-funding.

**c) Honoraria:** JK advised that the trustees' recommendation is that the honorarium for the musical director should be £3,828, and for the deputy musical director should be £3,275 - an increase of 3.4%. He then sought the approval of members for this recommendation. **Approved.**

**d) Subscriptions:** The proposal is that membership subscriptions should be increased for the coming year from £108 to £111 for full members and from £72 to £75 for concessions. **Approved.**

**e) Financial Projections:** Looking ahead JK advised that we had maintained a healthy position financially and expected this position to continue going forward.

**f) Motion to adopt the treasurer's report:** JK then moved that the members adopt his report and the budget as recommended. **Approved.**

**8. Appointment of independent examiner of accounts (Rule 7d):** JK was pleased to confirm that Alan Harland had kindly agreed to act as independent examiner of the RMVC accounts for the year 2017/18 and moved that he be so appointed. **Approved.**

## **9. Section Leaders' and Choir Officers' reports:**

### **Section Leaders**

**a) Top tenors:** Dave Allen reported that 10 men had gone to Alsace and that an average of 14 members of the section attended each rehearsal and every concert. In addition the section had supported the Bucklebury Beer Fest and the Pangbourne WI. DA then advised that unfortunately three members had left the section, one with health issues, one through moving and one, Keith Hester, following very long service to the choir. The section now stands at 17 members. DA went on to say that he felt he had received great support during the year, but particularly appreciated the enormous commitment of Seb Boston, who travels in from Headington in Oxford – an eight hour round journey – and had missed very few rehearsals or concerts during the season.

**b) Second tenors:** Ray Sansum started by saying how sorry he was to be leaving the choir but due to increasing family commitments and the fact that that his voice has been playing up he felt it was the right thing to do. RS told the meeting that the average attendance of the section at rehearsals was about 70%. There have been some problems due to ill health and we are looking forward to those affected being back with us as soon as possible. However in spite of reduced numbers he felt that the performance of the section had been excellent. The section is also very pleased to welcome a new member, Arnie Howell. RS then thanked in particular Ted Wiggins for his attendance, in difficult circumstances, at rehearsals and often in the audience at concerts. Finally he thanked Clive Pugh for his very able input in helping us through some of the more difficult harmonies.

**c) Baritones:** Allan Crisp said that he had enjoyed his first year back as section leader and thanked members for their support and for the many tasks 11 of them carry out within the choir. There have been some health problems but the section, which is 21 strong, achieved 84% attendance at

rehearsals during the year and 74% at concerts. Allan particularly wanted to thank the choir as a whole for the support they gave to him for his Kilimanjaro challenge, where of the £7000 he raised £2000 came from a choir concert and members' individual donations.

**d) Basses:** Alan Broodbank began by saying the basses had ended last season with 20 members and started this season with the same number; unhappily, however, two of these members, Bill Andrews and Gavin Roynon, have been unable to attend due continuing ill health. The 18 regular members remaining have managed to achieve a very creditable attendance of 89% at concerts. He felt the basses were fully up to the job of providing a reliable, confident and solid foundation for the rest of the choir. Almost three quarters of the section take on often unsung roles in the choir and he wanted to thank his section for this significant contribution to the smooth running of the choir. He also wished to thank the committee for all their hard work, as well as the continuing support from our founder Gwyn Arch, but in particular he thanked Clive Waterman for his dedication and musical leadership, which together with Lucy's has led to the choir probably singing as well if not better than it ever has.

#### **Choir Officers**

**a) Equipment Moves Co-ordinator:** Martin Deaves wanted to say a quick thank you to the more than 20 men who have helped during the year and particularly to Jim Grufferty who has kept the container in order and to three men who have helped every Sunday throughout the season – Paul Smallman, Neville Waites and Peter Woodward.

**b) Transport Co-ordinator:** Kevin Boyle then thanked all the van drivers. Everything had worked well throughout the year and all had linked in very effectively with the equipment team

**c) Alan Broodbank.** As the choir's health and safety officer Alan advised the meeting that there had been no accidents or dangerous occurrences this year, the choir's staging has been examined for safety, and the electrical equipment checks are in hand. In addition a first aider's life-saving course was held. It was initiated by Allan Crisp and was supervised by Julia Little with considerable help from Steve Madgwick.

#### **10. Presentations for long service:**

40 Years - Clive Pugh

30 Years - John Clarke

20 Years - Allen Appleby; Frank Neale

10 Years - Peter Blake; Nigel Shaw

**11. Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation:** These certificates have been designed to recognise a member who has left the choir or is leaving the choir after a long period of service. In this first year of the award presentations were made to

Keith Hester

Bob Pitts

Clive Pugh

#### **12. Other motions from sections and members:**

**Potential Purchase of a Box Trailer:** SR advised the meeting that this had been a question raised with him recently, particularly when taking into account the cost of hiring a van in order to deliver our staging and equipment to each concert. He believed matters to consider were, on the more negative side, where could the trailer be securely held (preferably under cover), who would be willing to tow the trailer to each concert, health & safety issues, insurance, maintenance etc. However on the

positive side, money would be saved over time and there was the possibility of hiring out the trailer and contents and earning an income. A wide ranging discussion followed. SR then asked by a show of hands whether or not there was an appetite to consider purchasing a trailer or whether members preferred to maintain the current system of hiring a van. By an overwhelming majority it was decided to maintain our existing van hire arrangements. Accordingly the motion listed on the agenda was withdrawn.

**13. Other motions from sections and members:** None were presented

**14. Election of Committee members and Officers:**

Having been proposed and seconded, the following were elected unanimously and unopposed.

**Committee members/trustees**

Chairman	Steve Richardson
Deputy chairman	Geoff Gale
Secretary	John Painter
Treasurer	John Kay
<i>Section leaders</i>	
Top tenors	Dave Allen
Second tenors	Dave Ewens
Baritones	Allan Crisp
Basses	Alan Broodbank

**Choir officers:**

Concert co-ordinator	Nigel Shaw
Assistant secretary	Andrew Evans
Librarian	John Clarke
Social secretary	Dave Ewens
Equipment moves co-ordinator	Martin Deaves
Transport co-ordinator	Kevin Boyle
Health and safety officer	Alan Broodbank
Minutes secretary	Peter Blake
Publicity officers	Andrew Evans and Keith Knee-Robinson
Wardrobe master	Robin John
Web master	Jim Grufferty

**There being no further business, the chairman closed the meeting, the next annual general meeting will be held on 6 July 2018.**

**Appendix A**  
**Members attending 2017 AGM**

<b>Tenor 1</b>	<b>Tenor 2</b>	<b>Baritones</b>	<b>Basses</b>
<b>John Adams</b>	<b>Nigel Shaw</b>	<b>Bryan Verran</b>	<b>David Adby</b>
<b>Peter Woodward</b>	<b>Rex Fenn</b>	<b>Andrew Evans</b>	<b>Norman Rees</b>
<b>Pat Connell</b>	<b>Dave Ewens</b>	<b>Allan Crisp</b>	<b>Philip DeVille</b>
<b>David Lloyd</b>	<b>Brian Foster</b>	<b>Derek Reigate</b>	<b>Alan Broodbank</b>
<b>Dave Allen</b>	<b>Jim Grufferty</b>	<b>Ray Emmans</b>	<b>Paul Buckle</b>
<b>Allen Appleby</b>	<b>Arnold Howell</b>	<b>Paul Lyden</b>	<b>Chris Bintcliffe</b>
<b>Frank Neale</b>	<b>Ted Wiggins</b>	<b>Neville Waites</b>	<b>David Brownhill</b>
<b>Kevin Boyle</b>	<b>Geoffrey Million</b>	<b>George French</b>	<b>Richard Williams</b>
<b>Andy Searle</b>	<b>Ray Sansum</b>	<b>Robin John</b>	<b>David Pomeroy</b>
<b>Tony Dunne</b>	<b>Clive Pugh</b>	<b>Ryland Lee</b>	<b>Tony Batchelor</b>
<b>Paul Champion</b>	<b>Roy Mantel</b>	<b>Geoff Gale</b>	<b>Jeremy Jones</b>
<b>Colin Hinks</b>	<b>Peter Blake</b>	<b>Stephen Dale</b>	<b>Artur Stankiewicz</b>
<b>Ken Lunnon</b>		<b>Paul Smallman</b>	<b>Tony Rawlins</b>
<b>Keith Knee-Robinson</b>		<b>Martin Deaves</b>	
<b>David Paine</b>		<b>John Clarke</b>	