

## Dates For Your Diary

Please put these dates of our next four concerts into your diary:

Autumn Concert  
22nd November 2008  
St. John's Church  
Old Coulsdon

Christmas Carol Concert  
13th December 2008  
United Reformed Church  
Caterham

Spring Concert  
4th April 2009  
St. John's Church  
Old Coulsdon

Summer Concert  
27th June 2009  
De Stafford School  
Caterham

Please direct any feedback, comments or suggestions to:  
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## *NEWSLETTER*

2008



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

### **'A Way with Words'**

A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tyred.  
What's the definition of a Will? It's a dead give-away.  
Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana.  
A backward poet writes inverse.  
In a democracy it's your vote that counts; in feudalism it's your Count that votes.  
If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.  
With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.  
Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A flat minor.  
When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.  
The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.  
A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.  
You get stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.  
He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.  
A lot of money is tainted: 'tain't yours and 'tain't mine.

Ann Goss



to wait for the 2009 newsletter to find out. At least you will have a year to practise his suggestions!

Gill English

### A Program with a Difference

My sister went to a concert in one of the Baltic States and brought back the programme. In the list of instruments 'tromboon' is obviously a trombone, and 'viul' looks reasonably like violin, but could you guess what the following instruments are?

1. torupill
2. klavessiin
3. plokklöödid
4. Löökpillid
5. pommer

Sue Simpson

## Contents

Chairman's Report	4
Conductor's Report	6
Secretary's Report	9
Treasurer's Report	11
Secretary's Report	10
'The Vicar of Dibley' Alternative	12
Sorry Sir	12
Faking, Busking and more	13
A Program with a Difference	14
'A Way with Words'	15
Diary Dates	16

Answers:  
1. horn  
2. harpsichord  
3. recorders  
4. Percussion  
5. no, not an Englishman in Australia; it's a dulcimer!

### ***From our chairman:***

This is my tenth Chairman's Report and it is difficult not to repeat myself. This year, although the choir is smaller in number, our concerts have been to our usual standard with a very varied mixture of music, from Purcell to Ramirez - something for everyone, we hope.

We sang at a new venue at St John's, Old Coulsdon and hope to continue there. The parking can be a little difficult but there are plenty of roads around. We can also hire staging from the Downland Chorale, who store it at St John's. Although the acoustics at St Marks, Purley were good and they have a fine grand piano, it is on the wrong side of the A23, and personally I avoid Purley like the plague - all that one way traffic and changing of lanes!

We were all devastated last year when John Kensett died. After being in hospital for months, and then being told he was coming home. The majority of the choir attended his funeral and sang some appropriate hymns and songs, and Jeffrey explained the choices to the mourners. We will miss his jokes and the tremendous amount of work he put in organising the concerts and other social events. I am so glad that Jill still comes to the concerts and helps to sell tickets at the door.

Jackie managed, with the help of Margaret Deadman, to continue as Treasurer, but feels she ought to retire as she cannot always be at rehearsals. We have persuaded Michael Pearce to take over from her. Getting the books to balance and allocating income to the right event/concerts is not always easy with money coming in in dribs and drabs, not always with an indication of what it's for. The Committee thank Jackie for all her hard work. Just in case you suspect nepotism, Michael is no relation to me.

Richard Broadberry gallantly sprang to the rescue and took over as Concert Manager. I hope he finds it easier as he goes along, his lists are excellent. Keith Cook, who has not been able to come to many rehearsals this year, hopes to come back but feels he must give up the Vice-Chairmanship.

May I thank all the Committee for all their hard work and also all the other people who have made the social events a success. Also those who have made money, Gill with her Bring and Buy sale, Sue who introduced a regular raffle, Joan with her excellent marmalade, Tree and Diane with their plants, and Ann with the Webb Ivory catalogues. Ann has left us to join a nearer choir which she can get to by bus. Lastly a big thanks to Tree for letting us hold our meet-

### **Faking, Busking and more**

Extract from 'A View From The Stands' or 'The Amateur Concert Wreckers Handbook', with apologies to Peter Akehurst for vandalising his script!

Chapter 4 - 'Rehearsals - Sowing the Seeds of Chaos.'

One of the most widely used skills is faking. Learn to sing really quietly. It is worth working at this as the rewards are tremendous. If you can reach a sufficiently high standard it doesn't matter what notes you sing all evening. But do try to move your mouth to the correct words in order to make it more convincing.

Faking is especially useful when you lose your place - one of the most common crises with which you will be faced.

The alternative to faking is busking. This can be useful in loud passages, but can be a bit dangerous if you are supposed to be singing quietly. Again it is important to keep your mouth moving to the correct words. If you stick to the basic chord of the home key you should be pretty safe. A few arpeggios usually do the job nicely.

If you are presented with long semiquaver passages, it is sometimes possible to arrange with a sympathetic neighbour to sing alternate bars. This halves the number of notes you have to master and gives you a chance to breathe.

In exceptional circumstances you may be reduced to learning the notes, but only resort to this if all else fails. There are few things more maddening than learning a difficult passage, only to discover at the concert that it is completely swamped by the brass.

It pays to sit at the back of your section. Apart from the remote danger of being asked to stand in if the soloist goes off sick, it is an obvious advantage not to be under the conductor's eye. So long as you keep your voice down you can exchange gossip, do crosswords or ogle whoever takes your eye.

In addition to knowing what to do about the music, you must also know how to handle the conductor. Sometimes during loud passages he may get excited and start to accelerate. Should this happen, it is a mistake to try and follow him. Not only does it call for greater vocal dexterity than you are likely to possess, but it is the choir's duty to keep a steady tempo which the conductor can follow without much effort.

Some conductors waste a great deal of rehearsal time on unnecessary detail. I remember one who spent half an hour getting a beautiful double hairpin on the last chord of a major romantic piece. However when it came to the concert most of the singers were lost long before the end and the whole exercise was futile.

There are plenty more useful tips in Peter Akehurst's book - but you will have

### **'The Vicar of Dibley' Alternative**

I discovered this in South Stoke Church, near Arundel. With 'The Vicar of Dibley' theme tune from our last concert in mind, here's "Psalm 23 for busy people":

The Lord is my pace-setter, I shall not rush,  
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals.  
He provides me with images of stillness, which restore my serenity.  
He leads me in the way of efficiency through calmness of mind.  
And His guidance is peace.  
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day  
I will not fret, for His presence is here.  
His timelessness, His all-importance, will keep me in balance.  
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of activity  
By anointing my mind with His oils of tranquillity.  
My cup of joyous energy overflows.  
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours,  
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord  
And dwell in His house for ever.

Sue Simpson

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### **Sorry Sir**

How I enjoyed the concert! Wrapped [rapt] up in the tunes of The Mikado, lulled by the melodies, enchanted by the soloist, I was far away in another world.

Oops, people round me were singing. I'd missed the cue. In fact, I had no idea what words I should have been singing. My mouth opened and shut in a way I hoped would look convincing to the audience. I did not dare look at you as I knew you would not be convinced. But, how stupid of me, of course I should have looked at you immediately. You were probably mouthing the very words I needed.

Lesson learned. From then on to the end of the concert, my finger was always on the next entry, my brain had taken in the first phrase, my eyes were on you. Promise I won't let myself be so carried away again. I'll concentrate on the job in hand.

Marion Davis

ings in her house.

Look forward to seeing you all on September 2nd.

Cathy



***From our conductor:***

Let me start this contribution by acknowledging the hard work, persistence and patience of George Feichter. For several years now, George has dealt with the majority of our programme material, our website and also with a lot of other written and printed material - and he has done so with great efficiency and calmness, even when yours truly has provided him with programme notes at the very last minute! George, I apologise wholeheartedly for the inconvenience and stress I have caused.....and hope that this brief note will not be too late for inclusion in the ESCS Newsletter! (*1st August!!! Ed.*)

As I write this, my thoughts very much concentrated on Saturday, August 16th, when I make my debut appearance as father-of-the-bridgeman - and I pray that I am not a carbon copy of Steve Martin in the well-known comedy film! Some might think that for someone who has spent a large proportion of his professional life performing in front of the public I might just take this in my stride, but for me Laura's wedding will have no "dress rehearsal", no chance to improve when the second show comes around (although I am reliably informed that twin sister Alexandra is looking at organising her wedding for August 2010 - so carry on saving, Mum and Dad!) and, most important of all, it is not a "performance". Whilst I suspect that most people see me as a fairly easy-going and generally relaxed individual, I anticipate evidence of a quite different personality on August 16th! Time alone - and possibly a few photographs - will tell!

Since I left the BBC in 2006 - with the attendant anxieties over earnings and occupying time during "retirement" - my diary seems to have been almost as busy as when I was in full-time employment at "Auntie". My teaching at Guildhall continues, though as a one-to-one tutor I tend to work more with students from Sussex and City Universities, and I also teach at Peterhouse, Cambridge and "guest" at Birkbeck College, London University. In addition, I have a number of private students, run vocal workshops, do the occasional solo job as a tenor soloist, still maintain contact with the BBC Singers, am involved in educational projects with both BBC and, latterly, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, adjudicate for music festivals, conduct ESCS.....and play an occasional round of golf! So, life is rarely dull or quiet. I have always enjoyed variety and in these tough economic times, more than ever I am grateful that I have been offered opportunities to use whatever abilities and talents I have. If you will pardon the pun, in the music business, having more than one string to your bow is a distinct advantage for most performers; few survive purely as singers.....

for making our singing fun.

We look forward to seeing you all on Sept.2nd, when we start our rehearsals for Haydn's Nelson Mass, to be performed on Nov. 22nd, and our carol concert on Dec.13th.

Gill English

***From our treasurer:***

After 13 years as Treasurer of E S C S, I'm finally (and thankfully!) handing over to Michael Pearce. I'm delighted to know that he has a lot of expertise in this area as it's pretty challenging for anyone who, like me, has no previous experience and has opted to use a method which accurately reflects the true financial gains and losses in a particular season, rather than using a simpler method. My 'system' has evolved over the years and involves a certain amount of angst when it comes to getting it all to balance (which is where I'm at now), but great joy when it finally does - who said numbers don't involve the emotions! I'll admit though that I now prefer the verbal puzzles in newspapers and magazines to the Sudoku type.

I must thank Peter Jeffries for his patient auditing of the accounts over the years and also thank Cathy and Margaret Deadman, who over the last couple of years have kept careful records of the money paid out and in for handing over to me very regularly, so that I haven't had to worry if I miss rehearsals (apart from not learning the music with the rest of the choir). Nor have I had to worry about physically visiting the bank and getting income into our account each week. Tree, my nearest choir neighbour, has been most willing and reliable in passing the cheque book back and forth between Cathy and me!

I didn't sing in the last concert but was in the audience and was very impressed by the choir's extremely convincing performance (not to mention Ian, Jeffrey and the soloists). It was a very enjoyable experience and as I hadn't been to rehearsals for a few weeks, it was lovely to be welcomed by so many of the choir. I haven't managed a holiday so far this year owing to continuing ill health but hope that perhaps I will. I hope anyway that you'll all enjoy the summer break and will come back in September, full of enthusiasm to tackle the Nelson Mass.

Jackie

she feels that she would like to hand over the job, and we are very grateful to Michael Pearce, who was an accountant, for offering to take up the post. Margaret, who has banking experience, will remain as assistant treasurer. Thank you Jackie for giving up your time all those years for the benefit of E.S.C.S. On a similar subject, Keith Cook is retiring as Vice Chairman due to ill health. We have always been grateful to Keith for his wide life experiences and his advice, and he will be greatly missed on the committee. Thank you Keith for all your input for E.S.C.S.

Richard Broadberry has come up trumps as our new Concert Manager. He has marvellous organisational skills, and no stone is left unturned in his attention to detail. He has such a lovely way of asking people to help, that no one can refuse!

We still require a Social Secretary, a Catering Manager and now a Vice Chairman. Please think about offering for one of these posts, as the committee is being really stretched to cover the vacancies. As I said at the A.G.M, goodwill can eventually wear thin, and able people may resign as a result. I have seen this happen before, and it is a real shame.

We have lost long serving choir members this year for various reasons, namely Ann Goss and Jean Pardoe, and we would like to let them know how much we have appreciated their loyal support. We have also gained new members whom we welcome, and hope they will have a long and happy time with E.S.C.S. We are always looking for more singers, and would be grateful if you would encourage anyone who would like to join us - particularly basses - to come along and see if we are the choir for them.

We were delighted to see Della and Paul at our summer concert. How they manage to fit us into their busy schedules is a mystery, but we all love to see them when they can make it, and Della's encouragement is heartening.

Where would we be without Jeffrey? His versatility is amazing! Not only does he play anything we put in front of him on the piano, he plays the organ, takes rehearsals and can even perform on D.I.Y. percussion! viz. Misa Criolla. We love his sense of humour; in fact he and Ian are blossoming as a great comedy duo!

Finally our thanks to Ian for stretching us and making us achieve more than we thought we could, and for his inventive programming. The providing of excellent soloists from Guildhall is a huge bonus, and above all thank you

....which conveniently brings me round to the contribution made to ESCS by my esteemed and highly talented colleague, Jeffrey Gray. What an asset he has proved since he joined us a couple of years or so ago. I know I speak for the choir members when I thank him most sincerely for his hard work, his humour, his quiet efficiency and his enthusiasm throughout both rehearsals and concerts. It is so reassuring to know that, following Jan Winstone, I have another assistant in whom I can place 100% trust.

As for the choir itself, I feel that the past year has been largely successful, despite the fall in numbers and the concerns I have over recruitment for the



future - and the seeming lack of self-confidence or commitment from some individuals. To dispense with the negatives first, I am worried that, unless we can buck the trend and recruit more singers, especially men (and in particular basses! - sorry!), we are very soon going to find ourselves in a very difficult situation where choice of suitable repertoire

for the available balance of the choir will be more than merely difficult. As things stand, it is no easy task planning programmes for our present membership so that a decent concert standard is achieved. ESCS has always been a choir open to anyone who wants to sing - no auditions, no requirement to read music etc.- and I have no desire for any change to that ethos. However, for me, there is no point in any choir falling short of a presentable standard. Achieving a balance whereby less secure singers are not over-challenged, the more secure not bored, the rehearsal time available being sufficient and well used, the work(s) not being impossible from the start etc., etc. is, in short, quite a challenge! Recently, that challenge has been made more difficult at ESCS because during the rehearsal period various singers have dropped out, thereby putting more of an onus on their remaining colleagues. Obviously, I am well aware that one cannot predict illness or other unforeseen circumstances, but if we are to produce of our best, then we must have total commitment from all members - and that means regular attendance and concentration in rehearsals - nudge, nudge.....and maybe a little more regular use of pencils!!!! Both Jeffrey and I try to keep a light-hearted atmosphere on Tuesday evenings. Apart from

the fact that we both prefer that, we feel that members produce better results if relaxed and encouraged to have a go, whether or not mistakes ensue!

The positives for ESCS are in fact many. The atmosphere within the choir has always been friendly and lively; long may that continue! Whilst I think it fair to say that over the past couple of years standards in concert have been somewhat variable, this year's programmes have each contained some excellent quality and proved what we are capable of doing.

Steadily I have introduced more unaccompanied singing into our programming - and equally steadily, I am met with fewer complaints as confidence grows. ESCS is a very capable and able amateur choir - if and when all members commit, concentrate and believe! No choir needs solo singers or "leaders" within any section - as long as everyone is prepared to set anxieties to one side and not be afraid of errors. The adrenaline rush can really make for an exciting performance - as ESCS has proved on a number of occasions over the years.

Next season's programming contains some wonderful and enjoyable music, so I urge all members to make the most of the opportunity to sing Haydn and Rossini - and whatever else we find in the season's repertoire! I hope that for you the summer break will be restful, pleasant and...maybe even with more of that proper, warm English summer weather like we used to have....especially on August 16th! Assuming I survive that parental challenge, I shall look forward to seeing you all again in early September.

Best wishes to one and all.

IAN



### *Secretary's report:*

Well, the time has come round again for me to write my contribution to our newsletter, and one thing that strikes me is the huge amount that we manage to pack into 10 months! Each of our programmes contained pieces which have really stretched us, and we have shown that we can do it! We received compliments from respected colleagues in other choirs for our performances of the Britten at Christmas and the Ramirez at Easter, and even our Welsh efforts in the summer were positively acknowledged by Della. Thank you to Ian for pushing us out of our comfort zone and helping us to achieve what at times did not seem possible.

Singing aside, we are continuing with our active social life. Our parties are popular and well attended, but would not be so successful were it not for our group of excellent catering ladies who come up trumps every time. I am really impressed with their willingness and culinary skills, and Jane Tiernan has the ability to provide - as if by magic - vast amounts of plates, cups cutlery glasses - you name it - she can get it!! A big thank you to Ceinwen and Keith for letting us use their lovely home for our summer party.

We all had great fun at our skittles evening. For me, Ceinwen won the prize for the most unusual/hilarious shot of the evening. I'm sure she was one of the Dambusters in a previous existence! We will be having another skittles evening next term - date to be announced.

Although not exactly a social event, the Bring and Buy earlier this year was enthusiastically supported, and was a good fund raiser for the choir, raising almost £200.

In the spring, Linda Horton took another group from the choir to the Albert Hall to sing Mozart's Requiem, joining choirs from all over the country. It is a fantastic singing experience, and we are grateful to Linda for organizing it for us.

We will be having our biennial Barn Dance again on March 21st. next year. It was a great success in 2007, and we sold approximately 100 tickets. All costs have gone up, so please put the date in your diary and bring friends and family.

Jackie has been our Treasurer for 13 years, and has performed the job excellently in her gentle, unassuming manner. Since she has been ill, she has still managed the task with the able help of Cathy and Margaret Deadman. Now