

## Dates For Your Diary

Please put these dates into your diary:

'Last Night of the Croydon Proms'  
28th September 2013  
Fairfield Halls  
Croydon

Christmas Concert  
7th December 2013  
United Reformed Church  
Caterham

Easter Concert  
5th April 2014  
St. John's Church  
Old Coulsdon

Choral Workshop  
10th May 2014  
Christ Church  
Purley

Summer Concert  
5th July 2014  
Woldingham Village Hall  
Woldingham

**Don't forget first rehearsal of the term is Tuesday, 3th September!**

Please direct any feedback, comments or suggestions to:  
George Feichter, email: [george@escs.org.uk](mailto:george@escs.org.uk)



# NEWSLETTER

## 2013

**making  
music**

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

## Contents

Chairman's Report	3
Secretary's Report	5
From our conductor	8
Treasurer's Report	12
Articles	13-19
Diary Dates	20

### **From Ian**

#### **ON A VERY SERIOUS NOTE – YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS PLEASE**

Late morning, Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, I received the following alarming text, sent from Ceinwen's mobile:

"C rolled off mountain. Airlifted. Cond serious. Pl tell Gill and choir."

At the time of writing that is all the information I have, but this sounds to be a freak and tragic accident. I understand Ceinwen and husband Keith have been holidaying in Germany. I urge you to keep Ceinwen, Keith and their family in your thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. I know that you will all join me in wishing Ceinwen a full and speedy recovery.

minor). He said that it was difficult, particularly the pedal part. Despite its difficulty, he seems to enjoy playing it especially, perhaps, the 'Gigue' Fugue. We heard him play it at one of our concerts.

Richard introduced the Fantasie in C by Saint-Saëns, which has a bell-like motif running through it, by means of an unusual simile. He said that listening to it was like eating marsh-mallows – 'One delightful sweet sensation after another'. It was a comfortable and comforting experience.

The recital, which was attended by about 40 people, was followed by a social gathering in the church hall, where we enjoyed drinks and canapés. This involved more work for Jane Tiernan and her team - we are very grateful to all of them.

**Colin Batchelor**

**Organ Recital by Richard Pilliner Dip RAM LRAM ARCM,  
at Caterham Valley United Reformed Church  
6<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

Richard Pilliner, our accompanist and also a distinguished and internationally known organ recitalist, generously gave of his time and artistry in a recital for the benefit of our orchestra fund. The retiring collection produced £457 and the expenses amounted to £137.93. The fund will, therefore be increased by £319.07 as a result of this event, which is a good outcome. We are very grateful to Richard for finding time in his busy schedule to give this recital. Richard presented an enjoyable and varied programme, which included works from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Composers from England (Elgar), Germany (Bach), France (Saint-Saëns and Dupré) and Hungary (Liszt) were represented.

I knew that we were going to hear the first movement of the Elgar Organ Sonata in G, with which Richard opened his recital, because I heard him practising it at one of our rehearsals and talked to him about it. Some of the other pieces, however, came as a surprise to me, especially the Liszt work. This was a transcription of his 2<sup>nd</sup> Legend for Piano called St François de Paule Marchant sur les flots, (St Francis of Paola Walking on the Waves). According to legend, the conditions in which St Francis walked across the Straits of Messina were very stormy. He was not allowed onto the ferry because he could not pay the fare. Liszt depicts very vividly in music the calm and dignified figure of St Francis walking on the sea amidst all of the turbulence that was going on around him. I thought that the transcription for organ was very effective.

Richard introduced each work in a very pleasant way, giving us some fascinating biographical information about the composers as well as insight into their music. I was amused to hear that Marcel Dupré's teacher, Widor, thought that his 26-year-old pupil's 3 Preludes and Fugues, Op 7, were unplayable. I wonder whether Dupré himself was amused when he discovered that he had written some pieces that his teacher, a renowned organist, could not play. Richard played the 3<sup>rd</sup> of these Preludes and Fugues (in G

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Hello all – I am writing this looking out at a grey sky, with the central heating on again and the winter duvet back on the bed. Will we have a summer this year? I wish we could!

Apart from the abysmal weather, something we Brits have an innate urge to mention at the first opportunity (!), I look back over my first year of being Chairman with a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. Enjoyment because I am very fond of you all, having been a member for 28 years and, let's face it, I'm just bombarding you all with information with a different "hat" on, especially as I am still Bookings Secretary! Satisfaction because I think we have performed really well this last season, and can be proud of having presented three splendid concerts – three cheers for us!

Of course, we couldn't do this on our own and our thanks, as ever, must go to Ian as he tackles our idiosyncrasies with his usual good humour and endless patience. Our gratitude also must go to Richard as he comes to the end of his first full season with us. We have been delighted with his accompanying, and with his company, and we hope he feels the same way. His generous gesture of putting on an organ recital for us in aid of the orchestra fund is much appreciated. As I write this I am looking forward to it with eager anticipation – but read further on in this letter and (hopefully) you will find a review of the occasion by our on-the-spot reporter. I will say no more!

My thanks must go to the committee members for all that they do for us, and for the support and encouragement that they have given to me during my first year as Chairman. Also to so many of you who work tirelessly on behalf of us all – Penny, our Friends Secretary, our Section Reps., John and Margaret Dale, Linda Aish.....I could go on and on, and dear Joan Ferrison, still making marmalade for us to sell even though she is no longer a member.

During this last year there have been moments of happiness, and of sadness too.

Jean, one of our sopranos, was married a matter of days before the summer concert, and still sang with us. There's dedication for you! Our love and congratulations go to her and to Ron, and best wishes for the future. Also Helen, one of our altos, sang in the same concert only days after surgery. What a brave woman! I hope she felt no after effects the following day.

On a sad note, one of our longest standing members, Aldwyn Jones, lost his dear wife Joy this June after a long battle with cancer. They had been married for 62 years. Those of us who attended her Thanksgiving Service experienced a rare musical treat as professional musicians, many of them family members, celebrated her life in a way that would have delighted her. Our thoughts and prayers are with Aldwyn and his family at this time, and it is wonderful to have him singing with us again.

Well – I shall not take up any more space in this Newsletter, except to wish you all **A SUMMER** (so glad it returned on the day of the concert!) and a jolly good break, and I look forward to seeing you on September 3<sup>rd</sup> – bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and ready for the fray!

**Mel Watts-Read**

This set of regulations was sent to me by one of my cousins in Canada.

#### **GOLDEN RULES FOR ENSEMBLE SINGING:**

- 1) Everyone should sing the same piece.
- 2) Take your time turning pages.
- 3) Do not worry if you do not have perfect pitch - you may find singing less stressful without it!
- 4) The right note at the wrong time is the wrong note.
- 5) The wrong note at the right time is still a wrong note.
- 6) A wrong note sung timidly is still a wrong note.
- 7) A wrong note sung with authority is an interpretation.
- 8) A true interpretation is realised when not one note of the original remains.
- 9) If you happen to sing a wrong note, give a nasty look to one of your neighbours.
- 10) If everyone gets lost except you, follow those who get lost.
- 11) If you are completely lost, stop everyone and start an argument about repeat marks.
- 12) Strive to achieve the maximum notes per second - that way you at least gain the admiration of the totally incompetent.
- 13) If a passage is difficult, slow it down. If it is easy, speed it up. Everything will work out in the end.
- 14) Markings for slurs, dynamics, ornaments and breathing should be ignored. They are only there to embellish the score.
- 15) When everyone else has finished singing, you should not sing any notes you have left.

Cristiano Rizzi - organist.

**Gill English**

spectacular fallings-out) but as a one-time internationally known sports person, is she representative of the average brain power of the species? One year we all had wooden ducks and bum bags for Christmas presents – what sort of closing down sale did she get that lot from?

I also tried squash. Beating merry hell out of a ball was quite satisfying. And then I would try dinky little shots to make opponents run and improve my chances. I was simply asked rather sarcastically if I couldn't hit it any harder?

Table tennis? Well this was easier and I have a killer forehand on occasion, but ping-pong, who wanted to play that?

I admit to enjoying watching tennis, snooker and very occasionally cricket, provided I have a crossword to do as well. But the most annoying thing about being bored with sport is that enthusiasts often cannot imagine why you are not interested. I once asked a stranger whom I was seated next to at a Burns Night dinner why it was important to win a round of golf. Rendered speechless, his jaw just dropped open and he turned to his other neighbour and ignored me for the rest of the evening.

It is necessary to actually enjoy whatever you are playing to get any benefit. The feeling of being virtuous because you *ought* to be doing so soon wears off. I think the most fun I had was playing squash with Helen. Both in our twenties, we thought we should try it. We were always so surprised that we managed to keep some rallies going that we kept losing count of the score, and couldn't remember who had won. Retiring to the changing rooms, both an unbecoming shade of puce through our exertions, we realised that the shower rooms were kept very warm because they also served those who came out of the cold swimming pool. By the time we had showered and dressed we were even hotter than when we had finished playing, still puce, bedraggled, exhausted, and helpless with laughter.

**Jane Tiernan**

### **Secretary's report:**

As I am writing this report for our summer newsletter, we are all basking in glorious summer sunshine, Andy Murray has won Wimbledon, the British Lions have come up trumps in Australia and with a bit of luck we will win the Ashes!

So in holiday mode I look back on our last year with a sense of happy satisfaction. I feel that we have all enjoyed the rehearsals and concerts and this has owed a great deal to Ian's programming of beautiful (and also fun) music within the capability of the choir. Listening to comments from both choir and audience is really rewarding.

On June 18th, some of us attended the service of thanksgiving for Joy Jones, the wife of Aldwyn Jones who has sung in the choir from its very beginning, over fifty years ago. Their wonderful marriage had lasted for sixty two years. The live music provided by musicians from St. Brides Church, Fleet Street and readings chosen, were both sensitive and uplifting and showed us all how much Joy was loved by so many people. We all admire Aldwyn's strength for coming to sing in the summer concert and attend the summer party.

I would also like to welcome our new members who have all made a great contribution to the choir both vocally and socially. Some choirs in the area have closed down which is sad. Therefore if you know singers who are looking for another choir to join, do please suggest East Surrey, especially as we are such a friendly and active group of people who love to sing!

We had one of our best summer parties yet at Keith and Cainwen's home. They are marvellous hosts who don't seem to bat an eyelid when about 40 people take their house over - eating and invariably balancing glasses of red wine! I have always said that our choir is a party waiting to happen and we know how to enjoy ourselves! it was good to see many new members there as well as Richard (accompanist) and Della who spoke to us so kindly and

amusingly as usual!

Last Saturday, Richard gave an organ recital at the URC in aid of our Orchestra Fund. The church was an oasis of cool on a blisteringly hot day and it was the perfect venue for the recital. Richard played works by Elgar, Bach, Saint-Saëns, Liszt and Marcel Dupré, many of which were fiendishly difficult. He appeared to tackle even the most complicated pieces with ease and polished musicianship, particularly the Dupré which was the most demanding of all. Before each piece, Richard gave a short explanation of the next item to be played and this added to our enjoyment and understanding of the music. We are indebted to him for giving up his time in his busy and demanding schedule. Jane Tiernan provided tasty canapés and drinks after the recital which were just right for the occasion. What would we do without Jane as our catering manager? She organised concert refreshments, the catering for the summer party (with her amazing team of people) and the food and drink for the recital all within the space of a week!! Many thanks from us all to Jane as ever.

Our next event is 'The Last Night of the Croydon Proms' on September 28th, details of which are printed elsewhere in this newsletter. I do urge you to come as it is such an uplifting experience and great fun to sing with other choirs. It is also FREE and only involves one rehearsal the evening before and one on the afternoon of the concert. I will be taking names at the beginning of term for Darrell Davison to put in the programme.

Then on October 2nd we will have our annual Skittles evening at Limpsfield British Legion. This is always hilarious and we have a hearty meal as well. It is a good time to have a chat with people and get to know each other as there is so little time at choir rehearsal. I shall also be taking names at the start of next term for this event. Partners are cordially invited.

I would like to thank all those who have given their time to help the 'ESCS machine' to run smoothly but will only mention two of them here. The first is Mel who has just completed her first year as

head and my view of the goalpost was impeded by her extra height to start with.

Gym – I can remember being helped once. I was gently tapped on the shoulder by our very shy teacher and told that in order to haul myself up on a rope, I also had to use my arms. Not a thought that had occurred to me – too worried about the wretched vaulting horse still lurking there, waiting for me to plonk down in the middle of it. And there was a fashion for doing gym in bare feet, and in a room which also served as a dining hall. I'm sure it was regularly cleaned, but it did not feel like it. There was one, brief, lesson on how to high jump, but the first girl to try (a red-haired friend of mine) threw herself into it with enthusiasm – and broke her arm on landing. We all heard it go.

Swimming – well that was a mile walk to the municipal baths. I suppose that those who could already swim or showed some aptitude made progress. Those of us (a lot) who frankly disliked the whole idea of the cold, the wet, the floundering, the business of getting dry and then the return walk seemed to get no encouragement whatsoever. As an adult I did ensure that my children could swim and finally managed to swim lengths myself, but never for pleasure.

I did play badminton for a time. I was good at the net, but opponents simply lobbed me at the back of the court and I could never get high enough to smash the thing properly. My cousin was for a time England No. 1 in this sport and has Commonwealth and Empire medals – it was not an Olympic sport then. Clearly this was a great achievement, but she is the one member of the family who has an innate ability to leave us all speechless on numerous occasions. Last year she sent her son a birthday card with a beautiful picture of yachts on it (he sails). Unfortunately she had either failed to notice that it said "thinking of you are this time of bereavement" or, even more probably, thought that it was a nice picture, she wasn't wasting money on another card, and never mind the words. He said he thought he should not read too much into the message (although this part of the family have had some

## **Me Enjoy Sport?**

It is sensible to exercise, and I do enjoy walking – for the pleasure it gives my eyes and ears rather than the actual movement – but competitive sport is not my scene. I know I am not the only one who considers the Olympic Games (anywhere) an appalling waste of money and time, but we live in a democracy and must therefore accept that it brings a sense of achievement and pleasure to many. As for watching – well if people set out to run a race, someone is bound to finish first....

School – well – hockey, rounders and tennis meant a mile walk (in a sedate crocodile) to our playing field, carrying all the gear – and sandwiches. I inherited an old hockey stick, just when the short-headed design was becoming de rigeur and my mother was not going to get me a new one. Oh the tedium of running up and down a grassy field chasing a mud covered white ball, hoping it wouldn't come anywhere near, because my stick was more difficult to manoeuvre and I could never run fast. One of the periodic "End of World" prophecies coincided with a hockey lesson – were we all going to come face to face with St Peter in those dreadful square necked, airtex, apple green shirts, which became a rather bilious yellow after frequent washing, and navy blue knickers? Then there were the newly installed showers. I very seldom got involved. I've never got over that awful feeling of drowning, whilst half of you is too hot from the water and the other half shivering with cold that is so unpleasant. Even my bathroom shower is strictly for guests.

Rounders – well I only ever seemed able to hit it straight to the bowler and was therefore instantly caught out. I actually like tennis, but having small hands, the force of the ball jars my wrist, and anyway when we were finally assigned a court to play on my friends would just sit down.

Netball. Now I fancied myself as a shooter and spent a lot of my break time practising. Quite useless of course. Stand a defender the required distance in front of me waving her arms above her

Chairman. She has given her all this year, even amidst difficult circumstances and has set us on a road with a clear vision and an exciting future. Mel is well organised, tactful, pays attention to detail and is forward looking - all qualities of an effective Chairman. The second is George our website manager and Making Music rep. who works hard in the background producing tickets, programmes, posters, newsletters and the choir brochure to name a few. He is a tower of strength for the choir and we all appreciate him and his computer skills immensely.

We have also loved having Richard as our talented accompanist. His gentle demeanour and sense of humour are much appreciated by all of us, as is his versatility and musicianship. We are very fortunate to have him to support us in our music making. Ian has again turned up trumps with his choice of music and ability to conjure up first class soloists from Guildhall with great regularity! He is reliable and unfailingly turns up to social events which demonstrates his affection and commitment to the choir. So I hope that you are all looking forward to next term as much as I am!

See you on September 3rd -

**Gill English, Hon. Sec**

**From our conductor:**

**YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND!!**

Following a recent highly enjoyable golfing trip to Devon, I resumed the challenge of cataloguing my extensive cd collection. "Extensive?" As a rough guide, let me quote a friend. "Assume each disc lasts one hour. If you start listening now and occupy twelve hours every day, you *might* get through them in a couple of years!" (But that is only the cds....he didn't include the old 12" vinyls (approx. 1000) ....or the cassettes - remember those? - (I lost count!). Anyway, I am making (slow) progress. At present I am wading through the highly varied "vocal recital" discs – and I have discovered some absolute musical gems in the process! You never know what you might find!

I admit that for me music is a passion, maybe even an obsession. But, just take a moment to consider this question. How many people can honestly say that for over 40 years they have been lucky (or privileged?) enough to earn a living through their hobby? During that time I have been offered opportunities to work as singer, accompanist, conductor, teacher, adjudicator throughout the British Isles and abroad. I have worked with top conductors and orchestras in major venues and travelled the world....and been paid for doing so! How good is that? So, when I am asked (as I am on a regular basis) why I still work so much, my answer is quite simple: I love it!

And surely, it is that ethos that drives amateur music-making? I am sure that you will be aware that science has proved that singing is good for you. It is a healthy activity, both physically and mentally, and that "feel good" factor should not be underestimated. So, when students contact me to book lessons during my summer "holiday", I am still happy to work with them.

Many untutored singers appear to think that the vocal contribution they produce at a choir or operatic society rehearsal is what (ie. *all* that) they have; they seem to overlook the *potential* in their

**LAST NIGHT OF THE CROYDON PROMS**

This is optional for choir members, but we hope lots of us will be able to go as we appear on the programme!

Those who went last year found it tremendous fun. It takes place on Saturday September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Fairfield Halls at 7.30 pm., and will include works by Wagner, Mozart and Beethoven (9<sup>th</sup> Symphony) in the first half.

The second half will include Sullivan, Rogers and Hammerstein and traditional "Last Night of the Proms" music. If you want to see the Mayor of Croydon standing in the Royal Box and waving a balloon with great gusto, this is definitely for you!!

The rehearsal will be on Friday September 27<sup>th</sup> at East Croydon URC, Addiscombe Grove, Croydon. CRO 5LP. (Near East Croydon Station).

Further details about timings and repertoire will be given at the beginning of the term.



**From our treasurer:**

The current cash funds position which should be the same as at the end of our accounting year to 31st August, 2013 is :

Cash at : COIF	£11,038
LloydsTSB	1,854
Bottle collection	126
	-----
Total funds expected at 31st August, 2013	£13,018

There are no outstanding invoices to be paid for 2012/2013

Less: Net assets at 31st August, 2012 see Newsletter 2012	£12,240
	-----
Increase in net assets	£ 778
	-----

The increase will get larger if any members have not yet paid for tickets but do so in future.

The orchestra fund stood at £761 and general choir surplus at £17 - making £778 in total. Before the Summer concert our surplus on general choir was higher but we made a loss on the Summer concert - we had to compete with Wimbledon, Formula 1 and fine weather.

Richard's recital was very successful financially as well as musically: the collection produced £457 and the only expenses were the hall hire at £120 and wine and fruit juice at £18. However, if we are not to deplete choir funds next year we need to raise more funds for the orchestra .

**Michael Pearce**

own instrument. This attitude fascinates and sometimes irritates me. I suppose there is a certain logic to thinking that, as the human voice can only be operated by its owner, the owner must surely know best how to use the instrument. However, I suspect that most teachers of voice would not agree with this assumption! Being able to speak or sing does not necessarily mean that the voice is being used as efficiently as it can be.

Consider for a moment the different dialects and accents heard up and down this country. Think about the "twang" you hear in an American's speech, or the thin, somewhat constricted sound of an Oriental and contrast these with the traditionally darker Russian timbre or the bright, forward resonance of an Italian. And yet, all of these are produced by 21<sup>st</sup>-century human beings....who do not greatly differ physically from region to region or from nation to nation. The vocal qualities are quite distinct and so very different, yet all are using the musculature of the human vocal anatomy – with quite contrasting results.

A year ago, we enjoyed the spectacular events of the Olympics, where athletes from across the world met to compete in their various specialisms. And the relevance is...???. Well, to me, singing is a specialism....and an athletic pursuit! The high jumper, the marathon runner, the sprint swimmer, the gymnast – each trains and disciplines his/her muscles to be capable of achieving the peak performance. So, in reality, is the singer greatly different? We all have arms and legs, but can we match the excellence of the top Olympic competitors? Of course we can't. We accept that only a select few reach the very top in their chosen event. But, even accepting that the answer to that question is in the negative, does that mean that we should not endeavour to optimise our own performance? In my opinion, very few singers genuinely explore the potential they have in their singing voice, sometimes through lack of interest, but often because they do not commit themselves to further an efficient technical delivery or use the instrument as nature intended. "Training" the voice is very much about control and balance of the muscles involved.....rather like the athlete!! True, it takes time, patience and

commitment – not to mention, *energy!!* - so starting at an early age is generally beneficial. From my experience, removing ingrained bad habits can prolong the process considerably, but it is never too late to work on improving the technical efficiency or the artistic delivery.

One brief example may help to emphasise what I am saying. Early in 2011, I began to teach a young soprano who had recently applied for undergraduate courses at most of the British conservatoires. She had received rejections from all except one, which placed her on the reserve list. When I first heard her, I have to admit that I was surprised that she had had this encouragement. The voice was small, restricted, often very nasal and the performer was shy and rarely connected to the meaning of the songs she presented. The voice was “Tweety-Pie on helium” – a description I later passed on to her! (Think of the cartoon character - “I thought I saw a pussy cat a-creepin’ up on me” - and then add the effect of helium on the human voice and you should be able to develop an aural image!). In September, 2013, that same singer will be taking up a place at the Royal Northern College of Music, having opted for Manchester over the five offers she had from other conservatoires.

The reason(s)? In brief, she and I explored and became aware of what she was doing to produce her sound. Gradually we freed up the vocal delivery, removing the throaty grip and connecting to a far deeper breathing position (engaging abdominal and lower back support muscles). The result? We discovered a far fuller, warmer, more resonant sound....so far removed from the original “quality” she presented that it sounded like a totally different singer! Add to that a greater awareness of textual content – how and why she sings specific words - and a young performer is now emerging, revealing more of her true potential.

Whether that potential will be sufficient for a professional career is of course another issue...and probably only time will tell.

Possibly this is where I and many amateur singers might be thinking differently? No matter how good or bad any singer considers him/herself to be, as a teacher my challenge is to find and work

for improvements and development of that voice ....and, likewise, of the performer. It takes time. It takes patience.....and commitment from both sides. It also demands far greater physical and mental energy than many singers realise.... or want to accept!! So, if/when you next sing, whether alone or with others, be alert and aware of *how* you are using your body and voice. Focus less on what you *think* you hear; your ears are not a good guide to the sound as others hear it! Perhaps at a future date I can elaborate on some specific technical ideas, but the end of this (written) sermon is not the time or place!

Perhaps a few hints will set in motion your thought processes?  
*Posture* – think tall and open. Adopt a stance that appears positive and important. Avoid slouching or collapsing the rib cage... but that does not mean tense or raised shoulders!  
*Breathe deeply* – an open throat with tongue forward will aid this.  
*Retain an open throat* at all times and support the breath flow from the lower abdomen and lower back.  
*Focus vowels and consonants forward in the mouth, using lips (AH>OO) or tongue (AH>EE) as appropriate....but always retaining an open throat.*

Don't be surprised if you feel you are running out of breath quite quickly. If you remove “control” (ie. restriction) of the breath from the throat, the body will, quite rightly, have to learn greater muscular control to regulate the breath flow. Be aware, be patient, be determined! And.....be energised!! You never know what you might discover!

So, now, what should I do? It is summer and I have time on my hands! A siesta? No! Domestic chores? No! Golf? Probably not! Gym? (Don't all laugh at once!) .....I've kept up the regime! Singing practice? Maybe.....or....I could go back to cataloguing those cds!!

See you in September....hopefully after I have unearthed a few more musical gems.....and also, like you, done some *regular vocal practice!*  
Enjoy the sun....while it lasts!!

**Ian Kennedy**