

Minutes Book
22/4/96

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Registered as a Charity No. 1026337

President: Vernon Handley

Chorus Master: Jeremy Backhouse

Accompanist: Jeremy Filsell

Chairman: John Trigg, 13 Vicarage Gate, Onslow Village, Guildford, GU2 5QJ. Tel: 01483 566341

Secretary: Stephen Jepsen, Clereholt, Felday Glade, Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6PG. Tel: 01306 730383

Treasurer: Christopher Robinson, The Coach House, Station Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EX. Tel: 01483 428400

Membership Sec: Noreen Ayton, 51 Garrick Close, Hersham, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 5MZ. Tel: 01932 221918

NOTICE is hereby given to ALL MEMBERS of the CHOIR that the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the Guildford Philharmonic Choir will be held after rehearsal

**at 8.30pm on Monday June 3rd 1996 at the
Methodist Church Hall, Woodbridge Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4RB**

when the following business will be transacted.

1. *Apologies for Absence*
2. *Agreement of the Minutes of the AGM held on June 12th 1995 (copy attached)
Matters arising from the Minutes of the 1995 AGM.*
3. *Chairman's Report*
4. *Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Accounts for the Year to April 30th 1996. Approval of Accounts.*
5. *Chorus Master's Report*
6. *Adoption of revised Clauses 5 & 10 of the Constitution (copies attached).
Note that these items each require a two-thirds majority to pass.*
7. *Election of Officers: Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary
Membership Secretary*
- Election of Four Additional Committee Members*
8. *Recommendation to Guildford Borough Council on the Appointment
(Re-appointment) of a Chorus Master.*
9. *Appointment of an Accompanist on the recommendation of the Chorus Master.*
10. *Appointment of an Independent Examiner of Accounts.*
11. *Any Other Business (which must have been notified to - and accepted for
inclusion by - the Chairman prior to the Meeting).*
12. *Election of Voice-Part Representatives. For this item, the Choir will
divide into seven groups, consisting of each Voice Part, but with all
Tenors in a single group.*

April 22nd 1996



**Stephen Jepsen
Hon Secretary, Guildford Philharmonic Choir**

Light refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the Meeting.

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Registered as a Charity No. 1026337

Minutes Book
Signed 2/6/97

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held at 8.30pm on Monday June 3rd 1996 in the Methodist Church Hall, Guildford.

PRESENT: Jeremy Backhouse (Chorus Director), Nicola Goold (Philharmonic General Manager), John Trigg (Chairman), 8 members of the committee and 80 choir members whose names are recorded on the associated register.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: John Britten, Neil Clayton and Penny Overton.

1. The Minutes of the AGM held on June 12th 1995, having been circulated, were agreed as a correct record and signed.
2. **MATTERS ARISING:** None.
3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** After welcoming Nicola Goold on behalf of the members, John Trigg said that after the difficulties of last year, he was pleased to report what he considered a satisfying, stable, first full year with Jeremy Backhouse, which had nevertheless managed to be full of excitement. He felt that the present professional team of "the two Jeremys" had together developed a good working relationship with the choir, with Jeremy Backhouse missing only two rehearsals - amazing considering his many other commitments, and especially so when remembering all those early starts for auditions.

John then commented on some of the musical highlights since the last AGM, mentioning especially: The venture of our first Open Air Summer Concert, working with the composer on Jonathan Willcocks's "Great is the Glory", the National Trust Centenary Carol Concert at Chichester, the Dvorák Stabat Mater with the Freiburger Bachchor, the Ed Warren "nautical" concert, and, not least, the Verdi Requiem with Grant Llewellyn, who was also coping with a nasty dose of 'flu at the time. After that concert, many people (including John Ludlow) had told him they had never heard the choir sing better, including a comment that every concert heard had been the best yet! Conductors had also been effusive in their praise. He thought that Jeremy could not hear better thanks for his work, but he was now thanking him on behalf of the choir nevertheless.

The Freiburg visit had been all too short but again highly successful. Our organisation seemed to work well so it was a relief that coach trouble had not been our problem this year, with our own coach contractors helping out the Freiburg ones in an off-the-cuff extension of our respective choirs' long and happy relationship. Cornelia's severe autobahn accident was a shock, but it was good to hear she was now home and making steady, if slow, progress. Freiburg's new purpose-built Practice Hall was due to open on June 8th.

John apologised for the seemingly endless notices and paper circulating during rehearsals. The choir's management, in the shape of the Committee, had had a very busy year with the extra items and so much that was new (eg Shalford Park and Chichester) and that what most members had seen was only a tiny portion of the work that had gone on behind the scenes. He hoped that this had been seen as efficient and not officious. It was the desire of both Jeremy and the Committee to produce presentations and performances commensurate with the professional standing of the Orchestra with which we were associated.

John completed his report by thanking Penny, Margaret and Christine, who were retiring from the Committee - though not from active duty - Chris (who was definitely not retiring) for his tireless negotiation with the taxman, and the choir members for all their hard work. The dramatic improvement had been noted. In that context, although most members' behaviour was exemplary, he wanted to remind everyone that weekly rehearsals were not optional. Moreover, absences from final piano rehearsals or orchestral rehearsals were only grantable by the Chorus Director, and singing presence at concerts was not a matter of choice by a member from the "menu" available. We had a new management team at Millmead and it was up to us to support it.

4. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** Presenting the 1995/96 Treasurer's Report and Accounts (attached), Chris Robinson said that although there was nothing about the state of the Choir's finances which should cause concern, we had not ended the year with the high balances anticipated. Expenses in this year had been quite high. Choir numbers were down slightly but the covenanting level was extraordinarily high. He was not recommending that subscriptions should be increased for the current year, but this could not be ruled out for the future. The alternative was to increase fund-raising. Chris then thanked Bob Cowell for all his help during the year and for his efficient audit.

There were no questions from members for the Treasurer.

Formal adoption of the accounts was proposed by Michael Jeffery, seconded by Nick Lamb and approved nem.con.

5. **CHORUS MASTER'S REPORT:** Jeremy Backhouse's report (attached) was warmly received.
6. **REVISED CONSTITUTION** (requiring a two-thirds majority): The proposed revisions to clauses 5 and 10 of the Constitution had been circulated prior to the meeting together with Chris Robinson's explanation for the change. John Trigg asked for any questions or objections. There being none, he proposed that the revised clauses be duly incorporated. This was carried nem.con.

7. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY, TREASURER, & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:**

CHAIRMAN: John Trigg)
SECRETARY: Stephen Jepson) were elected
TREASURER: Chris Robinson) unopposed
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Noreen Ayton)

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

There were five nominations for four places. John Trigg proposed that the first four nominees listed alphabetically (Jackie Alderton, Roger Penny, Susan Ranft and Joan Robinson) should be declared elected unopposed and that the new Committee should be recommended to co-opt Rosemary Smith at the first committee meeting. Joy Hunter seconded this and the motion was carried nem.con.

8. **APPOINTMENT OF CHORUS MASTER FOR 1996/7 SEASON:** Jeremy Backhouse (having temporarily left the meeting) was proposed by John Trigg for recommendation to the Borough Council for re-appointment. Margaret Parry seconded and the meeting carried the motion by acclaim (nem.con).

9. **ACCOMPANIST:** *Jeremy Backhouse's recommendation of Jeremy Filsell for re-appointment was proposed by Roger Penny, seconded by Susan Ranft and carried unanimously.*
10. **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS:** *Bob Cowell said that as he had now taken over the Treasurership of the Guildford Philharmonic Society again, he was not available for appointment. It was agreed that it should be left to the Committee to make an appointment on behalf of the Choir.*

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**


Stephen Jepson gave a brief summary of the present position of the Association of Surrey Choirs staging project.

John Trigg reported that, although he had written to Tod Handley regarding the office of President of the Choir, he had had no reply. He therefore asked members for their thoughts, including suggestions for an alternative president. Among those suggested were Sir David Willcocks and Jonathan Willcocks.

12. **ELECTION OF PART REPRESENTATIVES:** *There being only one volunteer from each section, the following were declared elected.*

<i>Soprano</i>	<i>(1): Margaret Parry</i>	<i>(2): Dawn Smith</i>
<i>Alto</i>	<i>(1): Amanda Clayton</i>	<i>(2): Prue Smith</i>
<i>Tenor</i>	<i>: Andrew Reid</i>	
<i>Bass</i>	<i>(1): Michael Dawe</i>	<i>(2): Norman Carpenter</i>

The Meeting closed at 9.20pm.



2nd June 97

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR COMMITTEE

Registered Charity No. 1026337

DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION (3rd JUNE 1996)

The committee proposes to convene a Special General Meeting during the rehearsal on 11th May 1998 to consider the following amendment to the present Choir Constitution for the reasons indicated. Approval will require a two thirds majority of members present at that meeting.

If any members have any questions about the proposed amendments, please have a word with either the Chairman or the Hon Treasurer.

CLAUSE 5a.

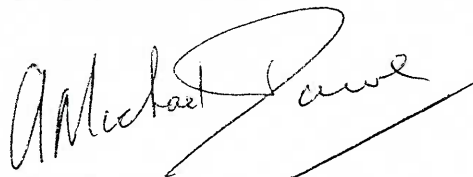
After "... and an Honorary Membership Secretary" insert "who shall be the Trustees of the Choir".

REASON. At present all eight committee members are Trustees. This amendment would limit Trustee responsibilities to the four officers, ie those members of the committee who have direct responsibility for the day to day management of the Choir's affairs. This will simplify administration.

CLAUSE 9.

Delete "six weeks" insert "thirteen weeks".

REASON. At present the Hon. Treasurer and Independent Examiner of the Accounts have only four weeks in which to finalise, audit and print for distribution the Audited Accounts after the end of the financial year on 30th April as the Constitution also requires 14 days notice of the AGM. This has proved to be insufficient time to do the job properly. If the proposal is approved, the AGM this year and in subsequent years will be held in July rather than in June as previously.



Michael Dawe

Hon. Secretary

20th April 1998

sent Copy

CONSTITUTION

Introduction

1. During the course of the year the Committee has become aware of a number of relatively minor problems with the Constitution as at present drafted. It feels that it would be appropriate to address these problems now by putting forward some amendments for consideration at this AGM and, if then approved, by the Charity Commission. The Commission has meanwhile been invited to comment on the draft proposals and any comments received before the AGM will be reported to the meeting.

Composition of Committee - Clause 5

2. As drafted this Clause imposes on the Choir a number of restrictions which unnecessarily inhibit its freedom of action. It also contains ambiguities and omissions. As examples of these problems, Clause 5 currently prevents any Committee member from ever standing for reelection after the initial term. Again the two longest serving members, if they have served at least 3 full years are required, to stand down and could not then or subsequently be elected to one of the four offices. There is no provision for resolving disputes between members where three or more are in this position. The retirement provisions are moreover related to Choir season and not Choir year which is different. Again there is no provision to deal with the situation if an officer has to resign during the course of the year. The Committee feels that these problems can best be addressed by amending Clause 5 in the manner as set out in the Appendix.
3. A distinction is drawn between the four officer holders and the four additional members. A Chairman would be able to serve for a maximum of 5 years in that office in addition to any immediate prior service on the committee in some other capacity. That is not to say that he/she would want to do so but the Choir would have the flexibility to reelect a Chairman on a maximum of 4 occasions if it so wished and the office holder was so willing. The other 3 offices would not be so restricted as it is often difficult to find willing volunteers for these posts and it unfortunate to force a change where it is not wanted by either Choir or office holder. To ensure that there is some turnover in Committee membership, the longest serving of the 4 additional members would retire each year if he/she had served 3 full years. It is stressed that all members of the Committee, whether office holder or additional member would continue to be subject to reelection by the Choir each year.

Audit arrangements

4. The Charity Commission has pointed out that under the new regulations that will apply to the Choir's accounts for the coming year it will be necessary for the Choir to appoint (and pay for) a registered Auditor unless it opts for what is known as "independent examination". If it so opts, the Choir can continue with its present arrangement but must first amend its Constitution accordingly. The Committee feels that this would be the appropriate course of action for the Choir to take.

Recommendations

5. The Committee RECOMMEND that the Choir amend Clauses 5 and 10 as set out in the Appendix. Under Clause 12 this recommendation will require the support of two thirds of those members present at the AGM if it is to be effective. The changes will also require subsequent Charity Commission approval.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

1. Clause 5.

Amend Clause to read as follows:

5. COMMITTEE.

- a. The management of the Choir shall be in the hands of a Committee consisting of four officers, a Chairman, AN HONORARY Secretary, AN HONORARY Treasurer and AN HONORARY Membership Secretary, and four additional members. The Committee shall be elected by and out of the members of the Choir at the Annual General Meeting.
- b. Officers shall be elected TO A SPECIFIC OFFICE, SHALL HOLD THAT OFFICE FOR ONE YEAR AND SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION PROVIDED THAT A MEMBER SHALL NOT HOLD THE OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN FOR MORE THAN FIVE CONSECUTIVE YEARS. IN THE EVENT OF A CASUAL VACANCY OCCURRING IN ANY OFFICE DURING THE YEAR THE COMMITTEE SHALL APPOINT ONE OF THEIR NUMBER TO ACT IN THAT CAPACITY UNTIL THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
- c. ADDITIONAL members shall hold office for one year and be eligible for re-election PROVIDED THAT the ADDITIONAL member who has served for the longest continuous period shall not be eligible for re-election AS AN ADDITIONAL MEMBER FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR IF THAT PERIOD IS AT LEAST THREE complete YEARS. Should there be more than one member INELIGIBLE FOR RE-ELECTION under this rule, the retiring member shall be decided by agreement amongst those concerned OR IN DEFAULT OF AGREEMENT AS THE OUTGOING CHAIRMAN IN HIS/HER ABSOLUTE DISCRETION SHALL DECIDE.
- d. The Committee may coopt members of the Choir to the Committee to fill vacancies or to assist the Committee when required.
- e. In addition the members of each voice part shall from time to time elect a Part Representative who will report to the Membership Secretary. A Committee member shall not also serve as a Part Representative.

NOTE The significant changes are set out in bold type.

2. Clause 10

Amend Clause to read as follows:

10. ACCOUNTS

The financial accounts shall be prepared by the Honorary Treasurer, independently examined and presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting at which time an Independent Examiner shall be appointed for the forthcoming year.

GPC Annual General Meeting
3 June 1996

ACCOUNTS 1995/96 AND BUDGET 1996/97
Report by Hon. Treasurer.

2409
Copy

INTRODUCTION

1. 1995/96 has been a difficult year, administratively and financially, as a result of the "covenant debacle" but thanks to the cooperation of all members we have emerged from it rather better than at one time appeared possible. Overall our reserves at the end of the year are down by £2200 representing the loss on the year compared with a profit in the previous year of £5600. However at £15300 our reserves are still fairly healthy and adequate for our immediate needs.
2. In the succeeding paragraphs I only draw attention to a few key issues on the accounts as audited and outline the budget approved by Committee for the forthcoming 12 months. I will deal with details and answer any questions at the meeting.

INCOME

3. Membership and therefore subscription income is down slightly. However the key differences from last year are:
 - * a net tax liability of £1623 as compared to last year's expectation of a tax refund of £2072.
 - * the loss on the summer concert of £4703 as compared to last year's loss of £885. The concert is shown under income as theoretically it should at least break even although it is unlikely that it will ever do so. The net position reflects rehearsal and concert costs and also a payment of £2000 to the Borough Council.
 - * the reduction in the net position on 100 Club which reflects the new collection system; in future years the profit should on the same basis always be around £450.
 - * the reduction in bank charges and the increase in bank interest (despite generally lower rates) which reflects better arrangements with the banks for the management of funds.
 - * the miscellaneous heading which reflects, principally, the bringing into account of the current stock of choir folders.
4. Covenants are a valuable source of choir income, currently £17 pa for each covenant. 109 of the 145 current members have covenanted their subscriptions although I am still awaiting one or two replacement covenants. Some members not being tax payers are unable to assist the choir in this respect (unless they have a partner who is) but it is hoped that others who have not yet covenanted their subscriptions will consider doing so before next September.

EXPENDITURE

5. Fees and Hire charges are up a little on the previous year but by no more than would be expected. There are only two items requiring comment:
 - * the increase in administrative expenditure from £20 to £320 is in part a reflection of the additional work involved this year in organising the Freiberg visit, in handling the replacement of the covenants and in the negotiations in relation to the staging project. It is also a result of the Hon Secretary and Hon Treasurer, between them largely responsible for this extra work, both operating from home, who have charged fully their telephone, FAX and copying costs.
 - * the sum of £234 which represents the net cost after deduction of grants from the Mayor and Twinning Association of entertaining our Freiberg guests.

X

11 No Staging project w/ charges
Choral w/ Freiberg
Choir Pen
Shall be

RESERVES

6. In addition to Stocks referred to above, our assets comprise principally our cash balances at the bank. The bulk of the reserves are held in a 60 Day Notice account at the Trustee Savings Bank where they get a reasonable interest rate but are also readily available when required. At £15300 Reserves are sufficient to enable the choir to meet a prospective commitment of £2000 towards the staging project and the potential liability to the Borough Council of £2000 (as well as rehearsal costs) for the forthcoming Summer concert whilst at the same time leaving sufficient in hand to allow planning to proceed for the 1997 Summer Concert.

BUDGET

7. The Committee consider it prudent to proceed on the basis that end year reserves should never be allowed to drop significantly below £10000. They have approved a budget for next year on this basis as set out below:

INCOME	SUBS	7550	EXPEND	FEES/HIRE	9000
	TAX	1800		SUBS	450
	GRANT	3500		PUBLICITY	350
	100 CLUB	480		STAGING	2000
	FUND RAISE	500		OTHER	1000
	SOCIAL	100			
	CHORAL	-5000			
	OTHER	750			
	TOTAL	9680		TOTAL	12800
		PROFIT/LOSS			-3120
		RESERVES AT START			15300
		RESERVES AT END			12180

This budget was prepared on a no change basis; eg membership and subscription rates remaining at present levels and costs not increasing substantially. The reserves at end are better than originally approved as the start position is better than was anticipated at the time the Committee approved the budget.

8. It would only be too easy for the Choir to be complacent and find themselves in the position they were in a few years ago. The future will always be uncertain and a degree of caution is therefore the right policy. The Committee therefore feel that whilst it would be reasonable to hold the subscription at its present level for a further year, there should be no reduction in the efforts made to raise additional funds and to increase the number of covenants. New arrangements for fund raising are proposed and will be outlined at the meeting. However, we ought to be capable of improving significantly on the £500 budgeted. For instance if our 150 members between them bought only 300 tickets in total each year for our 3 concerts, then assuming an average £10 a ticket we would get £600 from ticket sale commission alone. We ought to be able to do much better than that.

CONCLUSION

9. In conclusion I would just like to reiterate my thanks to all Choir members for their forbearance during the last 12 months in the light of my continual hustling; and also to Bob Cowell for all his assistance over the same period on computer matters and finally for his tolerance during the audit itself whilst I was on holiday in Greece.

Christopher Robinson
Hon Treasurer

28 May 1996.

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

AUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1995/6

INCOME

ITEM		1995/6		1994/5
Subscriptions:	Received	7440.00		7880.00
	Tax refund	440.11	7880.11	2127.44
			3400.00	10007.44
Grant				3460.00
100 Club:	Fees	1188.00		1399.00
	Prizes	-735.00	453.00	630.00
				769.00
Fund Raising:	Tickets	445.30		367.40
	Music	120.00		54.00
	Goods	51.30		-370.45
	Drinks	65.35		99.05
	Sales	81.20		207.15
	Tapes	0.00	763.15	78.00
				435.15
Social Events:	Summer	-110.38		384.07
	Christmas	179.05	68.67	-53.81
				330.26
Choral Events:	Workshop	19.46		0.00
	Summer	-4703.70		-885.20
	Chichester	248.50		0.00
	Carols	100.00	-4335.74	0.00
				-885.20
Bank Interest			622.62	370.83
Misc			489.12	0.00
Total			9340.93	14487.48

EXPENDITURE

ITEM		1995/6		1994/5
Fees		5835.00		5468.25
Hire Charges		2326.00		2581.00
Publicity		270.00		270.00
GPS Subscription		438.50		420.00
Administration		304.73		20.00
Bank Charges		39.00		53.42
Transport		0.00		7.00
Presents		36.15		39.12
Freiburg		234.85		0.00
Returned Tax		2072.42		0.00
Total		11556.65		8858.79
Excess of Income over Expenditure		-2215.72		5628.69

BALANCE SHEET at 30th APRIL 1996

ASSETS

TSB	15701.48	
Premium Account	1708.92	
Current Account	2429.22	
Stock	363.78	
Debtors	881.00	
Subtotal		21084.40

Less


LIABILITIES

Creditors	5762.52	
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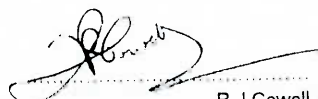
Total		15321.88
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FINANCED BY:

Reserves at Start	17537.60
Loss on Year	-2215.72
Reserves at End	15321.88



O. Robinson
Hon. Treasurer



R. J. Cowell
Hon. Auditor
29th May 1996

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

Registered as a Charity No. 1026337

President: Vernon Handley

Chorus Master: Jeremy Backhouse

Accompanist: Jeremy Filsell

Chairman: John Trigg, 13 Vicarage Gate, Onslow Village, Guildford, GU2 5QJ. Tel: 01483 566341
Secretary: Stephen Jepson, Clereholt, Filday Glade, Holmbury St Mary, Dorking, Surrey, RH5 6PG. Tel: 01306 730383
Treasurer: Christopher Robinson, The Coach House, Station Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1EX. Tel: 01483 428400
Membership Sec: Noreen Ayton, 51 Garrick Close, Hersham, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 5NZ. Tel: 01932 221918

Secretary's Report for the 1995-96 Year

Committee Meetings

The Committee met six times on the dates shown. The Venue is also shown. Attendance was 100% except as noted. Jeremy Backhouse was able to attend the first two meetings only.

- 03-Jul-95 Methodist Hall Committee Room. (Apol: Susan Ranft)*
- 15-Sep-95 13 Vicarage Gate, Onslow Village. (Apol: Penny Baxter)*
- 18-Oct-95 13 Upper Edgeborough Road, Guildford. (Apol: Christine Medlow
& Margaret Parry)*
- 17-Jan-96 Clereholt, Holmbury St Mary. (Apol: Christine Medlow)*
- 06-Mar-96 Harestock House, Westcott.*
- 17-Apr-96 Clereholt, Holmbury St Mary. (Apol: Penny Baxter
& Roger Penny)*

There was also a Working Party for the Freiburg Visit, which met once on January 9th 1996 at 13 Vicarage Gate.

Major items covered during the year included:

Special Arrangements for the Shalford Park Concert (1995).

Special Arrangements for the Chichester Carol Concert.

The Choral Workshop.

Improving Publicity & Ticket Sales. New Members' leaflet.

The future of GPC in the light of the GPO/SEMT discussion document.

*Constitutional amendments and Charitable Status for Tax purposes.
NFMS Membership.*

Social Programme. Summer BBQ, Christmas Party, Freiburg Reception & Dinner.

The Freiburg Visit & Concert.

The proposed Association of Surrey Choirs and new tiered Staging (primarily for the Cathedral).

Fund Raising.

Choir "Uniform" (dress at concerts).

The future and rôle of the President of the Choir.

S H R Jepson - May 31st 1996

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3rd June 1996

CHORUS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

When I stood up in front of you at last year's AGM, I had only been with you for about three or four months. Then, I reviewed a year of unsettled change, but was able to look ahead with optimism to a year of exciting music-making. And I think that the year has proved to be highly successful for the choir both in terms of your performances and the building of a stronger sense of identity.

So at this stage last year, we had not experienced our Shalford Park evening. Although the organisational route to the format of this concert was somewhat tortuous for us, our actual singing on the night was highly appreciated by the audience. As you probably know, I am keen to get the choir used to singing unaccompanied - it is a very good discipline in many ways, not least tuning and listening hard to one another - and I will continue to take opportunities in summer and Christmas concerts to show off the choir in its *a cappella* mode. On the occasion of last autumn's concert, I was particularly pleased with the control of ensemble and range of dynamics: the soft singing was especially impressive. I remember the very quiet ending of the Gorecki almost being drowned out by the rain and noise of opening umbrellas!

After the summer break came ^{the} Parry and Jonathan Willcocks' *Great is the Glor*. Of course, the Parry is rousing stuff and received a suitably rousing performance. The Willcocks piece posed a much greater challenge with its mix of dissonant timbres and rhythmic complexity. But we worked very hard and I think really enjoyed working with Jonathan in rehearsal, his enthusiasm for his work becoming infectious - although I have to say I was rather worried for the state of the podium after the hammering it took from his enthusiastic right boot! The actual performance was 'terrific', to use Jonathan's own words. The unaccompanied section at the beginning of the work came off brilliantly and the beauty and excitement of the work was communicated with great panache. One comment passed on to me after this concert was that that listener had not heard the choir sing so well.

We were then into Christmas, my first with the choir and I must say, I thoroughly enjoyed myself! The traditional Rotary Club concert in the Civic Hall was great but again, I was especially pleased with the unaccompanied singing of the choir and pleased with the way we handled the Swingle *Silence Night* and the eccentric *Twelve Days of Christmas*. The audience seemed to love both of these works - it was good to be able to repeat much of the music at Chichester Cathedral a couple of days later. That evening was quite a test of the choir - we had reduced numbers, complicated seating arrangements and choreography to deal with and Stephen thousands of miles away in the States. But I thought the evening had a magical atmosphere and I know was profoundly appreciated by the National Trust people and public alike.

The New Year brought the Choral Workshops. We were very lucky to have Ralph Atwood and David Lowe to guide us through Parry's *Songs of Farewell* and give us technical help. Although the stay could be termed a success, I think that there are elements that would need to be altered if we were to do another next year. The timetable would need to accommodate more time for vocal and technical work, less on note-bashing a work for private performance.

Then came the visit of the Freiburg choir. For me it was good to see and join the obviously close relationship that exists between the two groups of singers. About Hans Michael's warm-up exercises, I will say only that they lived up to their legendary status. I think they and we all had a happy weekend of it and the performance of the Dvorak *Stabat Mater* made for a fitting culmination. The link is certainly good and I am very much in favour of maintaining and the committee and I will be putting our minds to when would be the best time to make our next visit to Freiburg. An offer had been extended to us to make the journey in the Spring of next year to combine for a concert of part-songs or motets, unaccompanied or with only piano.

accompaniment. This I do not feel is quite the thing to travel out there for, so it has been suggested that we wait until the following year when they can accommodate us in their orchestral programme.

This concert was followed closely by Edward Warren's concert of Stanford. Delightful pieces, very well sung. Again, as with Jonathan Willecocks, it was good to work with a conductor who was so positive about the contribution of the choir. I think this amply made up for having to drop the Watson cantata, from both concert and recording, a decision that Edward and I took jointly having had time to study the score in close detail.

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Thank you.

GUILDFORD PHILHARMONIC CHOIR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3rd June 1996

CHORUS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

When I stood up in front of you at last year's AGM, I had only been with you for about three or four months. Then, I reviewed a year of unsettled change, but was able to look ahead with optimism to a year of exciting music-making. And I think that the year has proved to be highly successful for the choir both in terms of your performances and the building of a stronger sense of identity.

So, at this stage last year, we had not experienced our Shalford Park evening. Although the organisational route to the format of this concert was somewhat tortuous for us, our actual singing on the night was highly appreciated by the audience. As you probably know, I am keen to get the choir used to singing unaccompanied – it is a very good discipline in many ways, not least tuning and listening hard to one another – and I will continue to take opportunities in summer and Christmas concerts to show off the choir in it's a *cappella* mode. On the occasion of last summer's concert, I was particularly pleased with the control of ensemble and range of dynamics: the soft singing was especially impressive. I remember the very quiet ending of the Gorecki almost being drowned out by the rain and noise of opening umbrellas!

After the summer break came the Parry, and Jonathan Wilcocks' *Great is the Glory*. Of course, the Parry is rousing stuff and received a suitably rousing performance. The Willcocks piece posed a much greater challenge with its mix of dissonant tonality and rhythmic complexity. But we worked very hard and I think really enjoyed working with Jonathan in rehearsal, his enthusiasm for his work becoming infectious although I have to say I was rather worried for the state of the podium after the hammering it took from his enthusiastic right boot! The actual performance was "terrific", to use Jonathan's own words. The unaccompanied section at the beginning of the work came off brilliantly and the beauty and excitement of the work was communicated with great panache. One comment passed on to me after this concert was that the listener had not heard the choir sing as well.

We were then into Christmas, my first with the choir and I must say I thoroughly enjoyed myself! The traditional Rotary Club concert in the Civic Hall was great fun. Again, I was especially pleased with the unaccompanied singing of the choir and pleased with the way we learned the Swingle *Silent Night* and the eccentric *Twelve Days of Christmas*. The audience seemed to love both of those works. It was good to be able to repeat much of the music at Chichester Cathedral a couple of days later. That evening was quite a test of the choir: we had reduced numbers, complicated seating arrangements and choreography to deal with and Stephen thousands of miles away in the States. But I thought the evening had a magical atmosphere and I know was profoundly appreciated by the National Trust people and public alike.

The New Year brought the choral Workshop. We were very lucky to have Ralph Allwood and David Lowe to guide us through Parry's *Songs of Farewell* and give us technical help. Although the day could be termed a success, I think that there are elements that would need to be altered if we were to do another next year. The timetable would need to accommodate more time for vocal and technical work, less on note-bashing a work for private performance.

Then came the visit of the Freiburg choir. For me it was good to see and join the obviously close relationship that exists between the two groups of singers. About Hans Michael's warm-up exercises, I will say only that they lived up to their legendary status. I think they and we all had a happy weekend of it and the performance of the Dvorak *Stabat Mater* made for a stirring culmination. The link is certainly one that I am very much in favour of maintaining and the committee and I will be putting our minds to when would be the best time to make our next visit to Freiburg. An offer had been extended to us to make the journey in the Spring of next year to combine for a concert of part-songs or motets, unaccompanied or with only piano accompaniment. This I do not feel is quite the thing to travel out there for, so it has been suggested that we wait until the following year when they can accommodate us in their orchestra programme.

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