

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE TYNDALE CHORAL SOCIETY
HELD AT 7.30PM ON WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2005,
IN THE PARISH CENTRE, DURSLEY**

1. Present:

Anne Shipton (Chairman); Ian Harrold (Conductor); Lorna Lane (Treasurer); Julia O'Connor-Beach (Secretary); and

Catherine Bennett	Lesley Hewish	Frances Neale	Ros Wakefield
Brian Bolsher	John Hicks	Tim Page	Sue Walshaw
Jill Brown	Jacquelin Hill	Kathryn Palmer	Geoff Whiley
Fiona Chandler	Wenna Hills	John Palmer	Jean Williams
Mavis Church	Diana Hobbs	Kate Reeves	Rob Williams
Jenny Coles	Estelle James	Wendy Richardson	Lesley Wrangmore
John Ewer	Lynette Magnone	Miriam Salman	Elizabeth Young
Peter Harney	Derek Manning	Audrey Sewell	Andrew Young
Marjorie Harrison	Doreen Manning	Dick Skinner	
Betty Hebditch	Marion Miller	Sandra Tucker	
James Corbett	(Accompanist)	Mr and Mrs Jukes	(Patrons)
Apologies had been received from:			
Phil Butcher	Shelagh Fitzarthur	Brian Neale	Judith Taylor
Jenni Culverwell	Anne Glanville	Anne Nuttall	Joyce Theaker
Jean Dabinett	Claire Harrison	Lisa Randell	Lesley Townsend
Kate Delaney	Brian Kitching	Susanna Simm	Eve Tudgay
Gill Dickinson	Sally Lamerton	Val Skinner	Vanessa Weaver
Glenis Ewer	Caroline Marshall	Miriam Tait	Elaine White
Mary A Laybourne	Angela Pendlebury	Helen Roberts	

2. Minutes of the last AGM

It was proposed by John Ewer and seconded by Sandra Tucker that the Minutes of the 2004 AGM be approved as a true record. All in favour.

It was proposed by Sandra Tucker and seconded by Jill Brown that the Minutes of the General Meeting held on 21st March 2005 be approved as a true record. All in favour.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 The Chairman commented briefly on the great success of the 45th birthday party held at Amberley Rectory, courtesy of Rev Michael and Sandra Tucker.

3.2 Following the comments regarding the lack of staging at St Mary's Church, Wotton, the Chairman reported that polystyrene riser blocks had been acquired, which had provided an adequate solution.

4. Chairman's Report

"I thank you all for coming to our AGM this evening. This is your opportunity to be involved in the running of the society and to offer your ideas and opinions.

I would like to begin with the 'thank you's as usual. We have many people who are not on the committee who help us behind the scenes and if I name them I will be bound to miss someone. People who help with the coffee, the sales stall and on both concert days. Needless to say I thank them all most sincerely - but there is one person I would like to name and that is Dick, who puts together our newsletters and programmes. You do a fantastic job, not helped by people like me who take ages to send you things and whose computer is always breaking down!

It has been absolutely great that we have had so many new members this year, due in part to the two open rehearsals we have had. We hope to repeat the exercise again next season and have the same success.

We have had two very good concerts this year- both of which I, for one, thoroughly enjoyed, but more of that from Ian. I must at this point say a huge thank you to Ian whose rehearsals are not only informative but also entertaining. I think we have extremely professional concerts due in no small part to Ian.

We presented you with a survey in September in the hopes that you would tell us honestly how you felt about the society. Over half the membership replied and in the new year the committee will be discussing the results.

As this is my last Chairman's report I would like to change the format somewhat as I would like to address some of the issues raised in the survey. This is a personal response (as a long standing member of the society and as chairman), because the committee has not had the opportunity to discuss the replies at a meeting yet.

I feel that although we have had a successful season it has not been easy for the committee. Many initiatives for fund raising and ways to raise the profile of the society in the future have been enthusiastically discussed by the committee but have not met with quite the same enthusiasm from some of the membership.

From the surveys returned I sensed a feeling that fundraising was intrusive and that you would rather pay an increased subscription. I have some sympathy with that because, as someone who works full time and is committed to many other things, I know that leisure time is precious. But the survey also said that you wanted to keep the professionalism of our concerts, with good soloists and orchestra. To stay financially viable we would have to increase the subscription hugely if we were to have no fund raising events at all, or at least very few. This would undoubtedly mean that while some people would be happy with this, others might not be able to pay as much and would possibly leave the society. So, in fact, this may not help us as much as people think.

We have to be self-supporting. We are not an evening class that has financial backing, i.e. from the local council or some other group, and that is always at the back of the committee's mind.

I would like to think that social occasions (which may or may not be in the cause of fundraising) have their place in the life of our society. If we have no social occasions at all, then I believe that we would not sing so well together. We need to know each other to gel together as a choir. If we just arrived on a Monday and sang and then went home again we would not be such a cohesive group.

We need people to take an active part in the running of the society, not just the singing, and we are lucky that we have many of those. We DO need a committee and officers on a regular basis (for continuity), which is why committee members are elected for 3 years. Then they have to stand down for one year and may be re-elected in the following year. This means that we do not rely on just those who find it difficult to say no. It also means that there is time for the committee member to get used to doing their particular job. Any shorter time than 3 years means that the committee will always be made up of people who are new to the work and things may not run so smoothly.

Throughout this year the committee and I have tried, in vain, to find someone to take over as chairman. The officers are re-elected each year and nearly always agree to stand again, but sometimes they feel it is necessary to stand down and it is good to have new blood on the committee. We desperately need a chairman and I hope that one of you will feel that this is something you can do for the society and will come forward tonight.

As a society we need to decide exactly where we are going in the future. We have existed for 45 years and as a member for at least 75% of that time I have seen many changes. But during all those years what kept the society going was the loyal membership. Changes of accompanist, conductor, rehearsal venue and many other things didn't alter the main reason for our continued success and that was our commitment to putting on good concerts and to enjoy doing so. As a society we have to be so enthusiastic about what we are doing that we want everyone else to know also. We ARE enthusiastic about the music. That is born out by the standard of our performances and I am sure Ian would agree with me. Do we want this to change? I don't think any of us do, and so we must think of a way to ensure continued success in the future. I am very optimistic about this and I am sure that the society will go from strength to strength with your help and with the excellent leadership of Ian.

I thank you for putting up with me as your chairman for the last five years and a big thank you to the committee for all their hard work and for supporting me as chairman. I would particularly like to thank Jacquelin (who is retiring this season) who has worked SO hard for the society.

I am looking forward to singing for many years to come. Perhaps not for 45 years, but who knows!

5. Treasurer's Report

"I have distributed copies of the provisional Income and Expenditure Report for 2005 [copy attached]. There are details from AGM Cheese and Wine, raffle and Amberley Christmas Concert to be added.

We started the year with a balance of £2563 and finished with a healthy £4694.

Members and Patrons: Revenue from subscriptions increased by £374. Increase of fees and in number of members.

Refreshments and Sales Stall: Almost 100% increase in takings on refreshments.

Fund Raising: Break down on Page 2: Due to the hard work of a few motivated members who were willing to spend time and effort on setting up various methods of Fund Raising we have excelled ourselves in raising nearly £1100. Where cash has been donated (i.e. Smarties tubes) and the members have signed Gift Aid Forms, I can add this to Subscriptions and claim even more Tax.

Donations: Last year we had an anonymous donation of £400 plus good donations from Renishaws and Magnox. This year we haven't done so well. List on Page 2.

Tax Refund plus Interest: Many more members signed Gift Aid Declarations, on some of which I was able to claim Tax back to the year 2000. So this fantastic amount is a one-off and should settle to about £400 or £500 per year.

Concerts: See breakdowns Page 2. Surprisingly good ticket sales on the night of the Summer Concert with an audience of approx. 150 and Ticket Sales of £965 but very disappointing audience of 115 at the Autumn Concert with Ticket Sales of £836 (Budget was for ticket sales of £1400).

So we have finished the year with a healthy Bank balance. However if we wish to put on expensive concerts with decent orchestra and soloists we must continue to keep on fund raising and selling tickets. The fund raising can be jolly hard work for a few committed members. Selling tickets should involve all members `selling the Choral Society' by being proud of our productions and doing our best to get family, friends and neighbours to come along to concerts. If we don't want to sell tickets, then is there any point in putting on a concert?"

The Treasurer further explained that the Lloyd's 'incompetence charge' donation was compensation to the society for the bank's inefficiency at handling the change of signatories, which caused the Treasurer a deal of work and expense.

It was proposed by the Treasurer that the basic annual members' subscription be raised for the coming year by £1 to £40 (penalty of an additional £1 for late payment after 30 April). Should any member feel unable (or prefer not) to be actively involved in fund raising efforts, s/he may opt to pay an additional sum to support the Society in its work (say, £10).

A general discussion followed regarding fund raising, ticket sales, donations, the annual subscription, etc.

John Ewer: commented that he thoroughly enjoyed getting to know other members of the choir at fund raising events.

Tim Page: commented that one member who was unable to sell concert tickets had generously bought the tickets him/herself and torn up the tickets. Should any member consider this route in future, it would be more beneficial to the society if any unsold tickets were returned to the society, and a donation made. In this way, if the member has registered, the sum can be gift-aided and the tax reclaimed.

Dick Skinner: commented that any cases of hardship should be left to the discretion of the Treasurer.

Jacquelin Hill: commented that if the members were split into fund raisers and donors, it might prove divisive.

John Hicks: commended the committee on offering members a choice.

The Treasurer's proposed motion was seconded by Sandra Tucker, and was carried by the majority, with one vote against. There were no abstentions.

The Chairman and the meeting thanked Lorna for all her hard work as Treasurer over the past year.

6. Conductor's Report

"Last year I was able to tell you my first thoughts on working with Tyndale. Of course, I was delighted, but, in a way, a first year isn't the truest test. There is the element of a "honeymoon period", and members haven't heard the same old tired jokes and turns of phrase that all conductors use, or they are, at least, more tolerant! The second year is more typical. Certainly, for my part, I have enjoyed it hugely again - well, most of the time! - and deem it a great privilege to work with you all.

Our public face is shown in our concert-giving. The Spring Concert was a great success with our audience, although it proved quite difficult in rehearsal, and I was disappointed to have to hire in extra men to help. (One good point to

emerge was the pleasing impression they formed of Tyndale as welcoming and friendly). John Rutter's *Birthday Madrigals* were indeed quite testing, and it was really only on the day that they sparkled as they should. It just goes to show we can do it. I had expected the Percy Grainger folk songs to give us more trouble, but they seemed to go very smoothly, and the final performance of *Brigg Fair* with Lewis Brown was particularly moving. We showed that we could both lead and accompany with a flexibility I had hardly dared hope for in rehearsal. Finally, the Richard Rodgers medley presented its own problem - trying to make it sound like a proper choral piece, and not just a selection of glorious melodies! I shall not quickly forget the excitement of that last section of 'My Romance', nor the build-up of 'You'll never walk alone'. We were admirably served by our accompanist and our clarinet trio 'cabaret'. It was good to see a decent audience.

For me, the recent Autumn Concert was the musical highlight. I imagine the Bliss Pastoral was new to most members, and I hope you came to like it as I have done over the years. Even 'Naiads'! In performance, the shepherds were splendidly Arcadian, the naiads were almost sexy and the bandsters extremely bucolic. All of which are needed, though the real delight is that wonderful closing section, which I know I rehearsed to death, but it paid off in the performance, with some marvellous quiet singing. In the bicentenary year of Trafalgar, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* has not been neglected, but I think our performance had a drive and excitement worthy of such a great piece. I hope you will agree we were well served by soloists and orchestra alike. There was so much to enjoy, but the precision of the big 'in gloria Dei' fugue, and the breathless 'Et resurrexit' stay in my mind. As others have said, it was disappointing not to see a decent audience.

As a small postscript to the season, I look forward to our Carols at Amberley. Last year's were great fun, but I was perhaps a bit adventurous in my choice, so we are sticking largely to well-known material this year. However, a Harrold concert wouldn't be a Harrold concert without something few people know, so I hope you will enjoy Percy Fletcher's 'Ring out wild bells'. I am sure it will be an enjoyable evening.

So to next year. In July, we present 'A Tribute to Gloucester Cathedral'. I have pretty well decided on the contents:

Herbert Brewer: Evening Service in D, O Love most wonderful (Emmaus)
Herbert Sumsion: They that go down to the sea, By the waters of Babylon, Fear not O land
John Sanders: My beloved spake, Mandatum novum
David Briggs: Jubilate Deo
Ian Harrold: Ave Maria

As you know, I had hoped to put on Elgar's *King Olaf* in the autumn. A number of you (in the survey) have reminded me that we must live within our means, so it may be necessary to postpone my pet project. An alternative programme would include the Mozart *Requiem*, for which several of you have asked, and a shorter item, perhaps Elgar's *For the Fallen*, as it will be Remembrance Day, and it will keep Elgar in sight. Your committee and I will decide, as a matter of priority.

I have kept my comments to musical ones, but I must pay tribute to those who make it possible to make that music: to James Corbett, whose help at rehearsals is invaluable, and who is no slouch in performance either!, to the committee who work so tirelessly to make my job possible, particularly Doreen who finds these obscure pieces from libraries, and especially to Anne who has continued to be so supportive. Everyone seems to have a 'rock' these days, and she has been mine these two years; I offer her every good wish for the future, and hope she will be able to enjoy her singing with us even more.

When I was invited to take over the Tyndale Choral Society, I made it clear that I was keen to offer a challenge to those who had sung most of the standard repertoire, and occasionally to introduce it to those who hadn't. I have tried to do that, and while I know not every piece appeals to every member, like Nelson 200 years ago, I expect every singer in TCS to do their duty, to learn the music, and perform it to the best of their ability. If we can do that, we shall go from strength to strength.

I finish with some advice on how to learn music from Homer Simpson, which somehow escaped the Rodgers selection:

Dough, the stuff, that buys my beer,
Ray, the guy that tends the bar,
Me, the guy, who drinks my beer,
Far, the distance to the bar,
So, I think I'll have a beer,
La, Lah Lah Lah Lah LAAAH!
Tea, no thanks I want a beer,
which brings us back to Dough Dough Dough!Doh!"

7. Election of Officers

Lorna Lane and Julia O'Connor-Beach had agreed to continue in their posts. In spite of the committee's best efforts, no member of the society had declared themselves willing to take the position of Chairman. John Ewer therefore offered his services for a year, in the absence of any other willing party.

The Nominations were therefore as follows:

Chairman	John Ewer
Hon. Treasurer	Lorna Lane
Hon. Secretary	Julia O'Connor-Beach

It was proposed by Tim Page and seconded by Jill Brown that the above officers be elected to serve on the Committee for the year commencing 1 January 2006. The motion was carried unanimously.

With John Ewer's permission, Anne Shipton continued to chair the meeting.

8. Music Focus Group

Anne Shipton gave the following history of the 'music committee'.

"On your agenda it says 'Music Focus Group', but when it was set up it was called the 'music committee' – a misnomer because in fact 'committee' implies elected members and that was not how it started. Michael Power felt that he would like a group of people, representing the membership, to discuss the music that he was planning for the next season. It was only a discussion - not an opportunity to vote. The only requirement was that they had some knowledge of repertoire. Only four people came forward and so the group was formed. At no time was it in the power of the people in that group to have the final choice of music. That is, and always will be, the conductor's prerogative, finances permitting. However, as representatives of the membership, they are also able to bring to meetings music that the members have a wish to sing.

If there are people who are interested in becoming part of the group, then please let one of the committee know. The requirements are still the same (good knowledge of repertoire) and you may feel that this is a way for you to contribute to the life of the society without being on the regular committee. The group meets only once per year well in advance of the next season's concerts as Doreen has to order the music in plenty of time."

Various concerns regarding the method of selecting music were aired:

Tim Page: commented that the Trustees (committee members) have financial responsibility, and according to Charity Law cannot delegate to third parties a decision which might expose the society to financial risk.

Dick Skinner: commented that the decision process is a collaborative one between the MD and the committee.

Peter Harney: commented that the problem was one of semantics. The choice of programme was the decision of the MD, subject to committee approval.

John Palmer: asked to what extent are members' suggestions considered by the MFG and MD. The Chairman responded that all of the suggestions are considered, but not necessarily taken up.

John Hicks: commented that none of the announced pieces for the July 2006 concert were taken from the list of members' suggestions.

Marion Miller: commented that the membership should have confidence in their chosen MD.

Concerns were expressed regarding the disappointing (115) audience size at the November concert:

Various comments were made about the lack of confidence of some members in the Bliss 'Pastoral', and their reluctance to sell tickets as a result – both because it was not a well-known or popular piece, and because they personally were not enamoured of it.

Frances Neale: commented that she hoped we would have our usual audience back another year, and that this year's lower attendance would prove a 'blip'. Further, we must ensure that the programme is attractive.

Sandra Tucker: commented that there was a lot of competition for the classical audience on the concert night.

Tim Page: commented that we must build a loyal 'clientele'.

Anne Shipton: said we must all sell the chorus and its performances with enthusiasm.

Brian Bolsher: felt that when the performance is 'polished', then future audiences will be attracted by word of mouth. To this end, Brian felt that the pieces should not be too challenging.

Betty Hebditch: commented that the Summer concert (with Richard Rodgers medley) had proved a successful departure.

Peter Harney: commented that our audience was getting older by the year, and that we should think about encouraging younger listeners.

Sue Walshaw and Lynette Magnone: both commented that their young children had thoroughly enjoyed the concert, in particular the Bliss.

9. Links to Schools

Anne Shipton outlined a choral apprenticeship project run by the Bristol Bach Choir whereby school students are invited to join the choir at no cost and, with the support of an appointed mentor, attend rehearsals and sing in performance. This would be in line with the stated aims of the charity, would help cultivate potential future members, and would aid the charity in its fund raising.

Tim Page: commented that grants are available for such projects.

Frances Neale: commented that Renishaw supports youth projects.

James Corbett: commented that the BB Choir project had resulted in some students singing successfully in performance.

Anne's offer to investigate the viability of such a project was gratefully accepted.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 An e-mail message had been received from Angela Sinton (previous Hon Sec) in which Angela informed with regret that, due to poor health, she would not be returning to sing with TCS and she sent her best wishes. Anne Shipton to respond.

10.2 Ros Wakefield informed the meeting that Mrs Yvonne Dyball, a Patron, was unwell and in hospital. Frances Neale offered to send the members' best wishes.

10.3 Jacquelin Hill reported that she had received a letter from Tina Power (guest soprano for Nelson Mass) thanking her for her hospitality. Mrs Power also wrote appreciatively of the chorus' supportive performance.

10.4 Ticket Pricing

Jill Brown commented that she had had difficulty selling tickets due to the £8 cost.

Frances Neale felt that concessions for under 16s might encourage a younger audience/families to attend.

10.5 Tim Page commented that with small numbers in some sections it made music in 8 parts very difficult, and suggested that 4 part pieces might be more suitable.

10.6 Dick Skinner proposed a formal vote of thanks on behalf of the Society membership to Anne on her retirement as Chairman for all her years of hard work on the committee. This was seconded by John Ewer and passed unanimously by those present. John Ewer then proceeded to make a presentation to Anne of an engraved vase, gift vouchers, a bouquet of flowers, and a hand-made bespoke card, to which all had contributed.

11. Close of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.