



# Newsletter

## Welcome to 2017

I am honoured that the Trustees have asked me to be your Chair at this crucial time. My first task is to say well done to all who sang in our Christmas Celebration on 10 December. It was a joyous concert, and it was lovely to sing with a group so committed and immersed in the music. Nine Lessons and Carols at High Hurstwood followed the next day and we sang really well, to yet more acclaim from the Vicar and congregation. Well done again!

My second task as Chair is to welcome you back to our new and exciting term, one of the most momentous in the choir's history. We owe Colin an enormous amount and we must deliver our best ever concert at the end of this term as a thank you to him. Please do everything you can to learn the music outside rehearsals and be ready to start singing at 7.45

every week, as we have a lot to get through.

This term we will also be getting to know Mark Beesley, our new Musical Director, as Colin has asked him to take sectional rehearsals for the St John Passion. Mark's expertise as a singer and teacher of singing will be invaluable in helping us to deliver a concert to remember, for Colin and for ourselves.

We are a very good choir and we need to understand and believe that. Then we need to live it - on stage, in our hearts, at rehearsal and most of all when selling tickets. The concert on 8 April is huge for us. Failing to get 300 people into All Saints to hear it is not an option! The tickets are now live on the website and also available from our concert sponsors, Tester and Jones. So please, go out and sell them!

I also want to give you notice that our first

appearance with Mark Beesley will be on 13 May, as part of the Crowborough Community Festival. After a choral workshop day at All Saints, participating choirs will showcase what they do. We shall be singing extracts from the Vivaldi *Gloria* and the Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah*. Many of us know these well, but this performance is our opportunity to shine and attract new members.

The summer also beckons, with new things and a new venue. On 24 June, the glorious acoustic of St Denys' Church, Rotherfield, will resound to *Midsummer Monteverdi* in celebration of the 450th anniversary of the composer's birth.

**Keith**  
Chair



Photos: Nigel Casford



*Our Christmas Celebration concert was a great success, thanks particularly to the contribution of John Marsh and the enthusiastic participation of the audience.*

### Dates for your diary 2017

First rehearsal Winter/Spring term	11 January
50th Anniversary Concert—Bach St John Passion at All Saints	8 April
Crowborough Community Festival Choral Workshop Day at All Saints	13 May
Midsummer Monteverdi—Concert at St Denys Church, Rotherfield	24 June

# Soloists in the spotlight

As you will no doubt have realised by now, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert in April is going to be a big occasion. Our Patrons Dame Felicity Lott and Serena Kay will be there and we will be joined by our friends from Rellingen, as well as former members who are returning to sing with us.

We will be accompanied by an accomplished orchestra and six distinguished professional soloists. These include our friend and Patron, Serena Kay. Mezzo-soprano Serena is a graduate of the Royal College of Music's International Opera School and has performed with English National Opera, Opera North and many others, both nationally and internationally.

Singing the Evangelist will be tenor Nick Pritchard. Having read music as a choral scholar at New College, Oxford, Nick studied at the Royal College of Music International Opera School. He was awarded the London Bach Society Singer's Prize in 2013 and is currently a Samling Artist (the

Samling Artist Programme nurtures the artistic development of exceptional young singers).

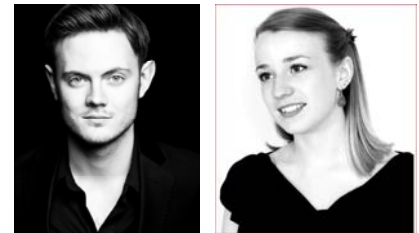
Bass Julian Empett will be a familiar face, having sung with us many times before. As a Lay Vicar at Westminster Abbey Julian sings the daily services and has taken part in numerous television and radio broadcasts, including the funeral of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and the marriage of Prince William to Kate Middleton. Julian's wider singing career includes work with The Sixteen, Tenebrae, The English Concert and the Tallis Scholars.

Soprano Angela Hicks enjoys a busy career as both a soloist and choral singer, regularly performing oratorios with a variety of choirs. Angela is a member of several leading UK ensembles including The Monteverdi Choir under John Eliot Gardner, Ex Cathedra and the Choir of The Chapels Royal, Tower of London.

Tenor Mark Curtis studied at the Royal

Northern College of Music under Frederic Cox and at the National Opera Studio. He has performed with, among others, the Royal Opera and Ballet, plus many roles with Opera North and has sung oratorio with major orchestras.

Bass Laurence Wallington is also a bass Lay Vicar in the Westminster Abbey Choir and sings with several specialist vocal groups, notably the Monteverdi Choir under the direction of John Eliot Gardiner.



*Nick Pritchard (left) and Angela Hicks (right), two of our soloists.*

## Situations vacant

As explained at the AGM, we have moved to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The CIO has just seven Trustees, and unfortunately two had to resign, as Trustees and from the choir, for personal reasons. We thank Jen Adams and Claire Russell for all their contributions and hope that when their personal circumstances change they might feel able to re-join the choir.

As the constitution requires the CIO to have seven Trustees, David McNab and Alan Crook have been co-opted and we thank them for agreeing to serve, though David, at his request, will only be with us for one year.

The full team is now: Keith Harcourt (Chair), Jane Smalls (Vice Chair), David McNab (Managing Trustee), Anne Symons (Secretary), Brian Short (Treasurer), Alan Crook (Concert Manager) and Susan Lewis (Making Music Representative).

There remain many jobs to do however and the Trustees are aided by several subcommittees, which organise specific areas of the choir's life and work. These include future repertoire, publicity, media, finance and social activities. So please step up to the challenge. The more the work is spread the easier it becomes. And the work is not just endless meetings, but

real practical tasks.

In particular, we need someone to establish the choir on Facebook and Twitter. We are also looking for somebody to look after the Friends of the Choral Society, as Charles Neve would like to retire after many years in the role. Also, do you have contacts in the media that might be useful, for example in local radio or television or in the local press? The choir needs you! Above all, don't hesitate to share your ideas. Get involved, and be part of making the music happen.

**Keith**



## From the treasurer

The Christmas concert was a great success musically, but it also made a good profit, which can go towards the costs of the 50th Anniversary concert in April. The Christmas profit could have been even greater, however, had we sold more tickets, so let's try to sell out in April!

**Brian**



## 100 Club update

Happy New Year to all 100 Club members – two draws done and four more to go in 2017!

We were able to offer four prizes in the bumper Christmas draw and will be able to do the same at Easter.

It was very satisfying to see our Treasurer win the first prize in the Christmas draw – very suitable for a man who is so good with our money!

Wishing all 100 Club members good fortune in the months ahead. As someone may once have said 'every little helps'!

Happy winning!

**Joyce**

