



# Summer 2018

Welcome to your summer update

## Headlines

- Where we've come from and where we're going—a message from Roger
- The end of an era and big shoes to fill—Janet bids us farewell
- New beginnings—what's coming up for FCS—opportunities and challenges

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## A message from Chairman, Roger Burbidge

**As another singing year closes** I must say a big thank you to all who have helped in any way to make it so successful. There are too many to name individually! Running an organisation like FCS is far more complicated than most people realize. Without this extra help to support the committee, carried out quietly 'behind the scenes', the Society could not function as efficiently as it does. You know who you are—so a special Thank You to you.

By now most of you will know Janet has decided to end her time as our MD as she is moving to live in France. To list all the benefits Janet has brought to the choir during her

11 years (in two spells) and 32 concerts would take far more space than I have! Suffice it to say her enthusiasm and professional knowledge have raised choir standards and audience interest for choral music in north Norfolk to a very high level. For these we are all most grateful—we cannot thank her enough. As we search for a new MD, he/she has a sure foundation to build on thanks to Janet's tenure.

One group I must thank is the committee. They have worked tirelessly during the year with many extra areas to look at, all on top of the organisation and overseeing of the concerts.

We already have people who

have taken on jobs to assist the committee, but we are always looking for members with specific skills. When we ask, if you can help, please make yourself known. If we do not know of your expertise, we cannot ask you, but you may well be the person to help take the Society forward.

The coming season will be the 45th since Bill Purchase started Fakenham Musical Society (as it was then). With a new MD and three concerts to look forward to, the stage is set for another exciting year. I hope you will be able to join us.

Roger Burbidge  
Chairman



### My Dear Members,

First of all let me thank you for a wonderful season. All seasons are memorable and enjoyable but the three concerts (and the Come and Sing) we have staged in 2017/18 have been inspiring and hugely successful.

In our December concert we were joined by the brilliant young harpist Oliver Wass and

## Janet, rolling back the years

his two friends on viola and flute who together make up the Pelléas Ensemble. In the first half the ladies of the choir performed Britten's magical Ceremony of Carols in its original version for upper voices and harp. There were many things to admire about this performance, not least the stunning solo and duet items from our own members. We are blessed to have such lovely voices in our group. In the second half the gentlemen gave

a spirited (and disciplined, thanks to Jim's direction) rendition of two of Vaughan Williams' carol arrangements which were first performed in December 1917. This was a moving centenary tribute indeed. The choice of carols for the rest of the programme was driven by the opportunity to use the ensemble as accompaniment. All gorgeous in the extreme, and made very special by the fact that the performers were so fresh and young. Their performance of the



first movement of Ravel's Sonatine lingers in the memory.....

The Come and Sing Day in February was taken by the composer Will Todd and culminated in a performance of the spectacular Mass in Blue with guest artists. This, as always, was such a great event in our year and singers from far and wide were able to take part together. The organisation of these days, thanks to Rosemary and her team of helpers, is one of the things that make our community events so popular, with all possible questions answered before they are even asked. Bravo Rosemary.

In March we put on a concert celebrating the extraordinary talents of Henry Purcell. It was a great thrill for me personally that we were able to secure the services of Norwich Baroque for this venture. This was not just about the authentic instruments, but also about the players' deep understanding of

style, speeds, ornamentation and other matters which made our performance so very special. Add to that some wonderful solo singing and choral contributions with exactly the right dramatic 'feel', immaculate diction, involvement and dynamics and I was so very proud of what we all achieved together. It will be a concert which will stay with me forever.

Finally, in June, we put on an epic performance (in spite of reduced numbers) of Carmina Burana. This work makes for guaranteed success providing it is performed with the required energy and drama (and lyricism at times). You delivered, as I knew you would, in spades and the audience reaction said it all. A perfect summer concert in a perfect summer venue.

As I look back on my time with Fakenham Choral Society (and I didn't expect to be back for a second helping when I left for the first time) I have so many fond memories. The concerts –

of course: Haydn's Creation, Faure's Requiem, Rutter's Requiem, Mass in Blue, Mozart's Coronation Mass and the utterly beautiful C Minor Mass, Vaughan Williams' Serenade to Music, Britten's St Nicolas, Verdi Requiem (unforgettable), Trial by Jury, Carmina Burana, Dido and Aeneas – the list goes on. You have faced some of these works with a distinct feeling of anxiety, as though you were standing at the bottom of Everest looking up, but you have put your trust in me, as I have put my trust in you and we have never been defeated.

You are a very special group with an extraordinarily brave and 'switched-on' committee (past and present). Without their hard work and dedication nothing is possible. My thanks also to my accompanists Jim and Kathleen for their support and professionalism.

My thanks are also due to the many other people who help to make FCS what it is. To our

marvellous Friends, sponsors, advertisers, stewards, to GJL for delivering our staging, to those who design and produce our posters and programmes. So many people give up their time and energy to ensure that all of our events run smoothly. I am truly grateful.

I come back to you though, my members. Cheery, tolerant, courageous, proud of your group, industrious when needed, and loyal to your musical director. The next incumbent will be a very lucky person indeed.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Janet

*“Music gives a soul  
to the universe,  
wings to the mind,  
flight to the  
imagination and life  
to everything.”*

*Plato*

## Finding that special someone

**It goes without saying** that we'll need someone very special to replace our Janet.

Recruitment has been in full swing for some weeks on various choral music websites, via the choir's Facebook and Twitter accounts, by direct email to local organisations and via word of mouth. Thanks to Fiona, we also enjoyed some press coverage.

The closing date for applications was 10<sup>th</sup> August and the Committee is now sifting through the candidates to short-list up to four. The plan is to invite two for interview and try-out on each of Tues 11<sup>th</sup>

and 18<sup>th</sup> Sept.

This is where we need your input! Each candidate will be asked to lead the whole choir for part of the rehearsal. Straight after each try-out we'd like you to complete a few short questions on an anonymous feedback form.

This system worked really well last time so your views are combined with the outcome of the interviews.

Although the final decision will rest with the committee, we hope you agree this is a very democratic way to decide who should be offered the post.

Ideally, we'd like our new MD to start on 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, our AGM.

This does mean we can't include our concert programme for 2018/19 in this newsletter. There will be some Messiah at Christmas though!

We're sure our new MD will be keen to celebrate our 45th anniversary in style.

Exciting times!



## The nitty-gritty of pounds, shillings and pence

**Over the last few months** the Committee has reviewed many aspects of choir life, from updating our privacy policy to the nitty-gritty of finances.

As a choir we're not in it to make money, but as a Charity we have an obligation to make sure our finances are sound.

As singing members we enjoy professional tuition and free score hire, all for less than £3 per week. However the everyday running costs - hiring the Salvation Army Hall, insurance, MD and accompanist fees, score hire, admin costs etc - add up to more than we receive in subs. This means we have no extra income for any unexpected rises in score or venue hire, emergency

expenses or to help towards concert costs. Technically this means that each concert should be 'self-funding', but in reality this is rarely the case, especially if we have an orchestra and/or several soloists.

Our ambition is to continue producing our trademark high quality concerts. So can we up our fund raising activities, including recruiting more sponsors and Friends? With everyone's help we can but we have to know we can cover our everyday costs for the coming season.

So the Committee has looked at these figures and the subs charged by choirs of similar size and aspirations and made the difficult decision to raise our subs to £120 for the 2018/19 season. This works out to less

than £3.50 per week, which is still incredible value for the tuition we enjoy and the music we hire. Many Community Choirs charge £5 per week and some Rock Choirs are over £30 per month.

We appreciate this is quite a jump and may be a struggle for some of you. As well as options to pay in full in September or 50:50 in September and January, we are happy to make ad-hoc arrangements on an individual basis to make subs more manageable. In confidence please contact either Carol Jennings (our membership Secretary), Gill Ashby or Barbara Wyvill (our Treasurers) who will work together with you to come to a suitable agreement.



*“As a choir we’re not in it to make money, but as a Charity we have an obligation to make sure our finances are sound.”*

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## From our Librarians, Sue & Tim Burton

**First, a huge thanks** to everyone for getting their scores back to us on time after the summer concert. We were running to a tight deadline before our family holiday and we made it as planned. We were even able to host our

usual ‘rubbing out’ party here in Whissonsett. Thanks to everyone who joined our rubber band.

We’re pleased to say that Norfolk Music Library seems to be running well in its new, self-funding, form and we have a good working relationship with their knowledgeable and helpful staff. We try to support them as much as we can, which sometimes means balancing tight deadlines with lower hire charges. Scores of Handel’s Messiah have now been booked. We have assumed that many members will have their own so please don’t forget to bring these to our first rehearsal.

With a new website about to launch we will at last have a platform for hiring out our own music. Over the next few months we will be carrying out a thorough audit of all our scores and then putting details online. We hope this will enable us to make at least modest additions to our funds in the future.

We are also adding links to lots of resources for practice to our private Members Area on the website, and hope this will soon be on everyone’s bookmarks list. Exciting times!

That’s all from us. We haven’t mentioned ‘soft pencils’ once ... oops, sorry





## Spreading the load love

**Corporate Sponsorship** is a great way to do some mutual back-scratching. Our new website and social media presence, along with our audiences and, of course, us as members, make FCS an attractive proposition.

Supporting a good cause is an important way for businesses to demonstrate commitment to their local community. So a key aim for FCS is to recruit you to help recruit new sponsors.

Following up on an email sent back in July, if you have a relationship with a local enterprise who might be interested, are you up to approaching them? If not, please let us have their contact details.

We've created a short information pack, setting out why it's good to support us. There are four levels of sponsorship starting at just £100 per year. Each level (named after composers) will

attract different benefits, such as their logo on our website and posters. Please ask if you'd like an electronic copy by email or printed version.

And who will be coordinating all of this? A group of two or three choir folks who are willing to give it a go!

## Christmas Tree Festival—we're in!

### 29<sup>th</sup> Nov to 6<sup>th</sup> Dec

Fakenham Parish Church has run a hugely successful Christmas Tree Festival for many years now. Staged over a week, it features over 60 trees each decorated by a local charity.

This year the committee decided to apply for, and have been given, a tree for Fakenham Choral Society.

The church is open daily from 10am to 8pm, (Sunday 12 noon to 8pm) and is visited by thousands from far and wide.

Each charity has its own pot into which people can make

donations. Whilst we hope to make a little money, the main purpose of taking part is to highlight our place in Fakenham, the music we bring to the local community and to encourage people to come to our concerts.

We'd really like this project to bring us all together.

The tree is provided but we'll need suitable musical decorations which could be crafted during the autumn.

Each group also needs to provide a short prayer of 60 words which is used during the event. Could you write

something reflecting what the choir does or means? It would be great to have several to choose from so the whole choir could vote for their favourite.

Helpers are needed to set up and take down the tree, plus volunteers to cover 10 hours, spread throughout the festival, either stewarding, selling raffle or tombola tickets or helping with refreshments.

We also hope to get a group together to provide some carol singing at some point during the week!

Gill Ashby will coordinate our



efforts and we need to confirm our volunteering times before September 30th. So please make a note of the dates and think how you can get involved.



**Moved House?**  
**Changed email?**  
**New phone number?**

*Please help us keep your contact details up to date by letting Carol Jennings or Tracey Thompson know*

**Important so that —**

- ⇒ **You don't miss key messages**
- ⇒ **We can contact you in an emergency**

### Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2019 at Fakenham Academy

Over the past few years the FCS Come & Sing days have proved popular with singers from far and wide and have provided FCS with a welcome addition to funds as well as raising money for local charities. On the strength of the success of previous years, and in particular our Will Todd workshop day this year, I have booked

## Come & Sing 2019

Fakenham Academy for a C&S Day on Saturday 16th February 2019.

The timings, how we run the day and what we sing will not be finalised until the autumn and will depend on our new MD, but I hope that you will all make a note of the date in your diary now and support what has become not only a major fundraising event but also a very enjoyable way to spend a February Saturday.

# Many hands... supporting your choir and committee

## The FCS committee

works hard throughout the year to cover all the administration work needed to keep the choir running smoothly. This includes putting in place and keeping up to date privacy policies, safeguarding policies, risk assessment and health and safety issues all of which we are now obliged as a charity to have in place. In addition the committee does all the concert preparation in conjunction with our MD to ensure that on concert days, the venue is prepared, the staging is erected, the MD, orchestra and soloists are looked after and that you know when and what is happening. The committee looks at fund raising issues like sponsorship and other ways of funding our running costs and the high quality of concerts that we all want to continue to put on. But it all takes time and the existing



committee members are already fulfilling vital roles. We can't emphasise enough that we really do need more people to play an active part in choir life, continuing to build on the choir's successes. This doesn't necessarily mean joining the committee, but you'd be welcomed with open arms if you did! So, please think long and hard about the list to the right and whether you can lend a hand.

Please contact Tracey with your suggestions and offers of help by emailing her at [thompta49@gmail.com](mailto:thompta49@gmail.com)

## Sofa? ✓ pencil? ✓ cuppa? ✓ Where can you help?

- Everyone** to think of and suggest new sponsors -- we need to increase our funds so we can cover running costs, special expenditure and some concert costs in the future
- A small group** to approach and engage with potential sponsors, to encourage participation in the scheme and follow up through the season.
- Everyone** to think about and suggest ideas for continual publicity in the press or on social media to keep FCS in the public eye
- A group** to make Christmas tree decorations
- Volunteers** to share the 10 hour commitment at the Christmas Tree Festival.
- Volunteers** to set up & take down the Christmas tree
- A group** to carol sing at the Christmas Tree Festival
- A small group** to consider fundraising in other ways -
  - ◆ What other small scale events would people support besides bake sale, book/CD sale
  - ◆ Could we have one bigger event that choir members would support besides the Come & Sing day
- A Safeguarding Officer.** Needs to be DBS checked (choir would pay if not)
- New Stewards** for concerts, to supplement those we have and to cover when people are away
- Voice Reps**
- Copywriter / Editor / Proof-reader (programmes)**
- Blank for your own idea*

## It's good to have Friends

**As Secretary** of the Friends of Fakenham Choral Society (FCS) I would like to thank all the Friends for their kindness, generosity, loyal support and encouragement during this past season.

As concerts and the day to day running expenses of the choir become increasingly expensive we are very fortunate to benefit from this extra source of income.

The annual subscriptions from our Friends are a valuable boost to FCS funds and have enabled

us to buy many essential items for the choir over the years, including our excellent keyboard and speakers.

Many Friends are past members, family or friends of current choir members and local people who enjoy our concerts and want to support the choir in this special way. The continuing interest and support of our Friends is never taken for granted and we very much hope to welcome them again for the 2018-19 season.

It would be wonderful to have some new Friends for this our 45th Season, so if you know of anyone who would like to support the choir in this way please encourage them to join. The annual subscription is now £20 for single and £35 for joint membership. Friends enjoy early priority booking for tickets, reserved seating, a free programme, a complimentary drink and nibbles at our Friends' pre-concert reception plus an invitation to the FCS end of season Garden Party.

Prospective Friends can contact me directly or you are welcome to ask me for a form on their behalf at choir rehearsal.

**Stephanie Walsh**  
Friends Membership Secretary  
Email: [stephwalsh65@icloud.com](mailto:stephwalsh65@icloud.com)  
Phone: 01263 861097



## 2018 / 19 DIARY

**Sept:** 4th, 11th & 18th (New MD try-outs), 25th

**Oct:** 2nd (AGM), 9th, 16th, 30th (no rehearsal 23rd)

**Nov:** 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th

**Dec:** 4th, 11th

**Concert 15th Dec at Fakenham Parish Church**

### 2019

**Jan:** 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th

**Feb:** 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th **Come & Sing Sat 19th Feb**

**Mar:** 5th, 12th

**Concert 16th Mar at Fakenham Parish Church**

**Mar:** 26th (no rehearsal 19th Mar)

**Apr:** 2nd, 9th, 23rd, 30th (no rehearsal 16th)

**May:** 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th

**Jun:** 4th, 11th

**Concert 15th Jun at Fakenham Parish Church**

**Sept:** 10th, 17th, 24th

**Oct:** 1st (AGM), 8th, 15th, 29th (no rehearsal 22nd)

**Nov:** 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th

**Dec:** 3rd, 10th, 17th

**Concert 21st Dec at Fakenham Parish Church**



Visit our **NEW** website at

[www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org](http://www.fakenhamchoralsociety.org)



Be a friend on Facebook.

Search for Fakenham Choral Society



And we're tweeting away on Twitter

Search for @choralfakenham

### **NEW WEBSITE!!**

Thanks to Tim for building this which will make it simpler to update its appearance and content.

### **PLEASE NOTE**

The **web address has changed** from co.uk to .org. If you have the old site bookmarked, you will need to change this.

## KEY CONTACT NUMBERS

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