

MALVERN FESTIVAL CHORUS
ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2021-2022

REPORT FROM JONATHAN BROWN – DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

I can't quite believe that it has been a full 12 months since I was writing my report for last year and much has happened since then. In last year's report I had written about how we had hoped to have been rehearsing face-to-face but that the stubborn Coronavirus had put paid to that, although some of us had been able to get together to sing the Brahms Liebeslieder Waltzes (which we had been working on in our online rehearsals) under the cover of Bridget and Malcolm's marquee in their garden on a somewhat watery afternoon in July, and this was lovely, not least in that we were able to sing together and, perhaps, giving us a reminder of what we had missed and what we might be able to return to in the following season.

Well, thankfully, we were able to return to face-to-face rehearsals this last year, which we did in the church hall of Holy Trinity, under strict protocols in order to mitigate the risk of infection. I would be lying if I said that it was an entirely comfortable modus operandi and, understandably, there was concern both about the continued risk but, mirroring that, about how those protocols would be so restrictive as to not allow for a sufficiently enjoyable musical experience. So, alongside the singing in the hall, we continued to have members join us online from home as per the previous year, and this allowed them to have at least connection with both the music and the singers. I feel that, as the year progressed and the Government's recommendations about restrictions were eased (and our procedures followed suit – sensibly of course), folk gradually felt a little more emboldened to return, and we were able to have a pretty-much uninterrupted rehearsal schedule throughout the year, and, despite our lower-than-usual numbers, we made good progress on the 2 pieces that we worked on – Karl Jenkins Mass for Peace ('The Armed Man') and Handel's Messiah. It's difficult to imagine 2 more contrasting pieces but what we wanted to do was offer something for everyone. Prior to that, some of us came together to sing carols outside Great Malvern Priory accompanied by Andrew Caskie on the keyboard on a rather cold and damp afternoon! This was in lieu of our usual Carols for All performance which simply wasn't possible due to Covid restrictions, but it was good to have some public singing again and to have a very appreciative audience to sing to. Traditionally, there is a collection taken, and this year, as Mike's report states, it raised £457 for the Worcester Acorns Childrens' Hospice.

This year has been about rebuilding. It has been well-documented that the Performing Arts are one of the areas of society most severely affected by Covid, and those effects have been pretty devastating. I see this in my work at the College too, where pupils have lost confidence in performing. A culturally-enriching activity such as ours is a very delicate eco-system and confidence is everything, both in the performance but, more importantly, having the confidence to engage with it in the first place. This re-building is not going to happen overnight – I reckon it is a 2-3 year process, and when I say re-building I mean re-building numbers of singers and re-acquainting ourselves (myself included) with the great tradition of the English Choral Society which we love so dearly, as well as reminding ourselves why we love it, and this culminates, of course, in performances.

So, our performances this year have, effectively been 2 Come and Sing events – one in May of the Jenkins, and the other in June of the Handel. Whilst both events culminated with a performance of the work, the most important part of the day was actually the preparation for that performance, latterly with an instrumental ensemble and soloists, and this we did with some visiting singers who joined us for the day, firstly in a vocal workshop where we worked on breathing, placement of the larynx, voice production and projection, followed by rehearsing, and then a performance at the end of it. We had a good number of visitors at both events and they were, once again, royally treated to our legendary hospitality! Although we love having Penny play the accompaniments for us, it was lovely to have some instrumental accompaniment

for the 2 performances, the Jenkins being a small, mixed ensemble from Regency Sinfonia and with Katie Leaver singing the Soprano solo and Hugh Fairey who was our Muezzin in the Call to Prayer, whilst for the Handel we had orchestral musicians, friends and soloists from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. This was the first time that we have had any instrumental involvement since the Faure Requiem Come and Sing in June 2019 – it's been a long time, but worth the wait! It was just fabulous to be back performing again despite the difficulties that we have had getting back together and those who were there must be congratulated for 2 really excellent days of music-making – and thanks to those of you who were unable to sing but came and supported by coming to listen in the audience.

So, looking forward...we have changed a couple of things. Primarily, we have taken the decision to return to St. Edmund's Hall at Malvern College for our weekly rehearsals permanently from September. I am grateful to the College for allowing this to happen and I hope that the change of venue with the better parking near the hall will be attractive to the membership.

I have also put forward a programme for the upcoming season that, in terms of quantity of music, is a return to things pre-Pandemic, although the rhythm of events is new. What I was keen to do was to explore the wealth of repertoire of Christmas music which, ordinarily, we wouldn't expect to do as we don't normally schedule a concert at that time of year (Carols for All being more small-scale Christmas works). Finzi wrote a number of these larger-scale works and In Terra Pax is one of my favourites. Vaughan Williams' wonderful Fantasia on Christmas Carols and Saint-Saens' Oratorio de Noel and a setting of Gabriel's Message by John Rutter complete the programme. Only the Finzi has been sung by MFC before (1994) with everything else being new repertoire. This will be accompanied by a string orchestra. Then, our second concert will be in May, we embark on a lighter programme consisting primarily of Stanford's Songs of the Fleet (last sung by MFC in 2003), Rutter's Sprig of Thyme (a collection of lovely folk-song arrangements), plus other shorter secular works by those composers. I feel that this represents a change of musical direction which, I hope, gives balance to our programming and will be welcome. Our final concert of the year will be another Come and Sing in July. I would like to make this an annual event where we can welcome visiting singers for a day's music-making followed by an informal but purposeful performance to round off the year. Having enjoyed Faure's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria in previous years as well as the Jenkins and Handel, we will be doing Mozart's Requiem next summer. This is, of course, extremely well-known, but it is a work that I ever tire of, and my hope is that this great piece will be attractive to both our own singers and visitors.

Looking further ahead, we have draft plans for the 2023-24 season which, as some of you will already know, includes 2 performances of Elijah with the 1885 Singers. In the past, MFC and the 1885 Singers have collaborated with one concert up here and the other in London. In that season, the plan is for the London concert to be in November (Southwark Cathedral) and then we reciprocate early-ish in the new year (ie 2024). We then do a concert of Rutter (Feel the Spirit – never performed by MFC) and Bernstein Chichester Psalms (last performed in 1991) in May, with a Come and Sing Haydn's Creation to round off the season. We are also considering a long list of works for 2024-25, with some (but not exclusively) of the following being closely considered (dates in brackets are when they were last performed by MFC)...

- Rory Boyle's piece – Cantemus Igitur (written for our centenary...!)
- Poulenc Gloria (2002)
- Purcell – Funeral Music for Queen Mary (not performed in their entirety)
- Tippett – Spirituals from A Child of our time (2003)
- Vaughan Williams
 - Toward the unknown Region (no performance on record)
 - Sea Symphony (1987)
 - Serenade to Music (2016)
- Gounod – St. Cecilia Mass (to be included in a concert for St Cecilia, whose feast day is 22nd November) (no performance on record)
- Puccini – Messe di Gloria (no performance on record)

- Monteverdi – Vespers (1987)
- Haydn – Nelson Mass (which we worked on in our Zoom rehearsals but never performed) (last performance 2008)
- Goodall – Love Divine (no performance on record)
- Will Todd – Mass in Blue (no performance on record)
- Miscellaneous works by Howells, Purcell, Bruckner, Bob Chilcott
- Opera choruses

So, I hope you can see that I am trying to put together a wide and varied set of programmes moving forward with music that either has not been performed in a long time or, indeed, never sung, by MFC.

In the past, I have been very remiss in neglecting (completely unintentionally) to thank Penny for her work with us as our accompanist. I know how much she loves playing for us (despite some fiendish music she has had to play at times) and I just want to place on record how much we value her support for us – THANK YOU PENNY!

I also want to thank, most sincerely, your committee. You will already know that they are unbelievably committed and they care deeply about MFC. I feel hugely supported by them and feel that you should know how much they support you too. We are all incredibly lucky to have them look after us, so I thank them – one and all – for all that they do to ensure our very existence and the smooth running and careful stewardship of us all.

That all said, I have to say that I feel that we are approaching a crossroads. As I have already said, Covid has hit us all hard and, as we have been emerging from the darkness, folk have been very understandably cautious about returning. However, numbers of singers (both in online and face-to-face rehearsals) this last year have been considerably lower than before the Pandemic and, if I am totally honest, I am worried about the future of Malvern Festival Chorus. If we are to return to (and exceed) pre-Pandemic standards of performances, programmes etc, we simply need the numbers of singers that we had before. If we don't, the scope of our repertoire will have to be continually reined in as we simply won't be able to afford to perform the great works with orchestras anymore. We really do need to get the word out there about us. I am trying to put together exciting, innovative programmes, blending familiar and less familiar music, old and new, and I hope that this will be seen as being attractive and energising. However, we all really need to pull together and make sure that everyone really knows who we are, what we do and what we have to offer. This year's programme has been put together with a budget being the primary concern – compromises over the orchestras have had to be made to make it happen – so please may I urge you to return in September, bringing along friends and family to come and give us a go (our first rehearsal is an open rehearsal so an ideal opportunity to see what we are about), encourage those who are unable to join us to come and support in concerts (ticket income is crucial and, sadly, a revenue that we haven't had for 2.5 years) and to shout our name from the roof tops.

Now that we are emerging into the light again, we have the chance of a fresh start where we can look forward with real purpose and, I hope a spring in our musical step. Quite simply, we must!

Thank you all, both for last year and, in anticipation, for our upcoming season.

AVB, as ever,

Jonathan

Jonathan Brown – Director of Music August 2022

TREASURER'S REPORT 2021/2022

Position

The detailed Accounts are shown on the Statement of Financial Activity, the Balance Sheet, and the accompanying Notes.

Concerts

Concerts held during this Season took the form of extensions to other events; ie the "Armed Man" Workshop in May and the "Messiah" Come and Sing in June. Attendance was largely friends and families of participants but nevertheless generated some revenue through ticket sales and donations for refreshments.

General Income and Expenditure

Subscription income and ticket sales were the sources of revenue for the year. Subscriptions for the Season (whole or part) were received from 62 Members, some of whom logged in to the on-line rehearsals.

Expenditure included the normal rehearsal fees for our musicians and to servicing the usual administration outgoings of Public Liability and Event Cancellation insurance, subscriptions to National Federation of Music Societies ("Making Music"), the ongoing maintenance cost of the Website, screen time for Committee meetings and general paper/postage costs, hire of Christ Church and Holy Trinity Church for events and payment of soloists and orchestras.

Charitable Donations

An amount of £457.13 raised at "Carols for All in December 2021 was paid to Acorns Children's Hospice in Worcester.

A retiring collection at "The Armed Man" Workshop raised £541.70 for the Disasters Emergency Committee fundraising effort for its work in Ukraine.

2022/23 Season

Budgets have been discussed for the forthcoming Season. It has been a matter of concern in the 2021/22 Season that current membership levels have served to pay for rehearsal musicians and halls plus the cost of general administration but produced very little surplus with which to pay for concert musicians and venues.

An increase in paid-up membership is vital if the Chorus is to put on the kind of performances to which it has been accustomed in the past without recourse to reserve funds.

Revenue from ticket and programme sales, is a vital element in paying for concert venues, contributing to the cost of musicians and minimising losses on concerts, but it is never assured and so Members are urged to play their part in promoting sales.

It is the intention to present concerts in early December 2022 and in May 2023 and to arrange a further "Come and Sing" in June/July.

Gifts, Sponsorship and Fund Raising

No grants or sponsorship were sought for this Season's events.

Independent Assessment

The above figures have been agreed by the Independent Assessor, John Connell, to whom the Committee's grateful thanks are due.

Annual Subscriptions, Season 2022/23

The Committee's proposals and recommendations for fee levels will be presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Membership subscriptions are presently the sole assured source from which all expenditure must be funded. Income from rehearsal raffles and refreshments, Bring and Buy sales, occasional sales of music, CDs and social events are only just starting to recover from the restrictions to the Chorus' activities. Levels of concert ticket and programme sales are unpredictable and cannot be relied upon to support the musicians required for performances or the overheads of the Chorus.

Concert proposals for the 2022/23 Season have been costed and set into the Chorus' budget for 2022/23. The assumption is that singing membership will number 80 and that the events will attract reasonable support in terms of ticket sales. Soloists are included for both events, orchestras for one event plus the "Come and Sing", which will use student musicians. The result is calculated as an overall loss of just under £6,900 for the Season. Whilst every effort will be made to offset such a loss with any income becoming available, the Committee recommends that this budget be accepted and funded from reserves in order that the Chorus may have a chance to regroup and to re-establish a presence in the district.

New members are always welcome – apart from swelling the ranks of the Chorus, the subscriptions will provide much-needed assured income to support the ambitious programming in the future.

Gift aid raises an individual's annual subscription by 25% and Members are urged to contact the Membership Secretary and join the scheme if their tax situation permits.

Subscriptions may be paid, by the end of September 2022, by direct transfer to MFC's Bank account:-

Malvern Festival Chorus; Lloyds Bank – Sort Code 30-95-41 Account No 00347783

Please give your name as a reference.

Alternatively, by cheque/cash to the Treasurer.

Treasurer

One nomination has been received for a replacement to the current Treasurer and will be presented to the AGM for approval and acceptance.

Michael P Tweedie – Treasurer July 2022

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It's annual report time again, a time for reflection and for thinking about the future. I'm grateful to Barbara for letting me read her draft report – as usual she has written hers before I've gathered my thoughts. Once again she has produced a comprehensive review of the year's activities and the challenges we have faced. I've also read through the newsletters that Bridget has produced through the year. Two predominant themes are evident: uncertainty and resilience. There was a time when our affairs were much more predictable, with set rehearsal schedules and a well-planned programme of concerts and events. Then Covid descended upon us and everything changed. We continue to live in its shadow, though our political leaders seem determined to pretend that the pandemic is over. I fear it will continue to have an influence on what we do through the coming year.

There have been times over the last couple of years when I have worried about the viability of the choir. Many choirs have disbanded but we have managed to keep going, thanks in part to using Zoom. I'm very grateful to everyone who has taken part in our activities over the last year, whether in person or on line. I'm evermore conscious that the choir has survived because of the loyalty of so many members through our difficult times and in particular because of the energy and commitment of a small group of people.

This time last year we were looking forward, with some apprehension, to resuming live rehearsals and wondering how we would manage them in the context of the Covid restrictions. We were fortunate to be able to use Holy Trinity Church Hall, where we were made very welcome. I'm very grateful to committee members Alice, Joy and Jacqui who worked hard to make the rehearsal process as smooth and as safe as possible, week after week. Chairs were set out in accordance with social distancing rules, sanitisers provided, lateral flow test status was monitored and we learned how to use a Carbon Dioxide monitor. This had been sourced for us by John Price before his resignation as Concert Manager last season. We learned how to organise and manage hybrid rehearsals using Zoom, harnessing the surprising power and versatility of mobile phones. Members adapted to these changes and restrictions very quickly and with equanimity.

Jonathan has directed our music throughout the year with dedication, enthusiasm and skill, ably supported by our wonderful accompanist, Penny. We're fortunate to have the benefit of their experience and expertise. I'm particularly grateful to my fellow committee members for their support and encouragement and for attending so many online meetings as we debated how to manage the many challenges we were faced with.

This time last year I paid tribute to Edwina Ward in anticipation of her retirement from the committee after the many years of service she had given it. In the event, no-one came forward to take her place and we were very grateful when she agreed to continue. Similarly, Mike Tweedie had announced that he was going to step down as our Treasurer but again, no-one volunteered to replace him. He has continued to serve as our Treasurer without comment or complaint and to run our financial affairs with great efficiency and scrupulousness. Louise Rosoman stepped down from the committee during the year and I would like to thank her for everything she has done to develop our Safeguarding policy.

Bridget Corlett has once again been very generous with her time, turning out in all weathers to make sure we had musical scores, encouraging us to write for our newsletters and editing them and – together with her husband Malcolm and daughter Jessica - hosting activities for us in her lovely garden. We rounded last year off with a concert there and this year we celebrated the end of the year with a very enjoyable sunny afternoon's garden party. These events take a lot of time to set up – and to tidy up afterwards!

Our indomitable secretary Barbara Moss has had another busy year, setting up Doodle polls, organising meetings, keeping meticulous minutes and coordinating our affairs. This requires a huge investment of time and effort. She has steered us through uncertain times with calmness and efficiency. I cannot thank her enough for her dedication and support.

The ebb and flow of successive waves of Covid meant that we had to modify our singing plans, as Barbara has written. It would have been wonderful had we been able to put on a Christmas Carol concert as usual but in the event singing outside the Priory on a rather cold afternoon was exhilarating and much appreciated by the audience that had braved the weather. People contributed generously to the Acorns Hospice collection, which made our efforts all the more worthwhile.

It was unfortunate that we weren't able to put on our Spring concert as planned and in particular that we weren't able to sing the piece that Rory Boyle had written for us. We're committed to performing it when we can do it justice in concert conditions and I hope we don't have to wait too long before that's possible. However, the "Come and Sing" day at Christ Church that we held in lieu of the concert was a very enjoyable event. We were pleased to be able to perform Karl Jenkins' "Mass for Peace" at last – we had been rehearsing it for so long – and to share the day with so many visiting singers. Who could have predicted the

poignancy of the timing, with war erupting so unexpectedly in Europe? The response to the Ukrainian Appeal was very generous.

I'm pleased that we were able to hold the final choral event of the year as planned, with another successful workshop, this time in Holy Trinity Church. Visiting singers again boosted our numbers and were particularly welcome among the ranks of the Tenors and Basses as we sang "Messiah". It was reminiscent of the days when we had many more singers in the choir and I look forward to a time when our numbers improve again. I'm very grateful to Richard Rosoman for organising our ticket sales for the workshops and to everyone who helped with catering arrangements. The teas were memorable!

So, what about the future? Currently our paid-up membership is about half of what it was in pre-Covid days. We will have to increase our membership if we are to put on the large-scale choral works that we used to, for membership subscriptions are our main source of income and are used to subsidise these. I appreciate that many former members have avoided in-person rehearsals because of Covid and that others have stayed away because of problems of access at Holy Trinity. I hope that moving our rehearsals to St Edmund's might encourage some of them back. We're very grateful to Jonathan for negotiating the move for us and to Malvern College for making this space available. We will need to keep ourselves in the public eye if we are to attract new members. I'm very grateful to Jackie Tolliday for the work she does on our website and in getting publicity into local newspapers, and to Heather Williamson and Dee Brook for writing concert reviews.

Our committee is smaller than it used to be, which means that each member has to take on more responsibility. We hope to welcome some new members at the AGM – please consider joining us! We're very happy to welcome observers to our meetings if you'd just like to see what we get up to before committing yourself. It's your opportunity to influence what we do and to shape our plans.

We have planned a varied musical programme for next year and I'm looking forward to the start of our new season. I look forward to seeing you at St Ed's on September 6. Thank you so much for your continued support for MFC.

Dr Kevin Ilsley – Chairman 15 August 2022

SECRETARY'S REPORT

It's difficult to believe that another year has flown by and once again I'm reporting on a season that has been far from normal. My report will of necessity record our activities as they continued to be affected by the pandemic.

One major difference from last season is that we have been able to rehearse together in person. Our normal rehearsal venue(s) weren't available, as schools were not accepting external hires and we therefore had to find an alternative which was big and airy enough to allow us to sing socially distanced (2 metres apart) and maintain good ventilation to minimise the risk of the Covid infection spreading whilst singing. The Upper Hall at Holy Trinity met our needs and we are very grateful to the church wardens there for making it available to us.

We were aware that we had a duty of care to our members and for this reason, in addition to the spaced seating, we made the decision for the first part of the season to ask members to wear a mask at all times when in the hall. As the season progressed and it became clear that vaccination was reducing the severity of infection and likelihood of hospitalisation, we relaxed this rule but asked that members should not attend if they had tested positive for Covid on the day of the rehearsal or had any cold-like symptoms.

Throughout the season we offered the option to rehearse on Zoom and Jonathan and Kevin became experts in setting up and streaming rehearsals. We thank them for keeping as many members as possible singing by offering this option.

The “rules”, in particular about mask-wearing, were popular and unpopular in equal measure. Popular because it had allowed us to sing together in person as safely as possible. But we knew from emails received that a good number of members had not returned to rehearsal, either because they were being extra cautious, or because they didn't like the restrictions we were imposing. To get some statistics on this, in January 2022 we conducted a survey of members, and this confirmed the anecdotal feedback that some were staying away because of the restrictions. It was clear that we couldn't satisfy everyone but we knew that protecting members had to be our priority.

The increased prevalence of the Omicron variant which had been taking hold from late autumn unfortunately meant that many members informed us of having tested positive and in the two weeks before Easter, we had insufficient numbers to rehearse in person. For those two weeks we offered rehearsals on Zoom only. Following what was effectively a 4-week break, the level of infection amongst our members had reduced significantly and numbers rehearsing in person returned to the season normal of 20+.

Our concert plans were also affected by the Covid situation. We held our usual Carols for All concert on 28 December but decided to sing outside the Priory as we felt it would be safest. Jonathan was our conductor for rehearsals and the concert. We were fortunate in being able to use Piers Maxim's electric organ, positioned in the Priory doorway and played by Andrew Caskie. A not inconsiderable audience wrapped up for a cold but dry afternoon of carol singing and entertainment. Our collection was in aid of Acorns Children's Hospice and we raised £457.

Because of the low numbers rehearsing and intending to sing in the concert, we also had to change our plans for what should have been a March concert of The Armed Man and Rory Boyle's piece, *Cantemus Igitur*, which he had composed for our Centenary concert planned for June 2020. It was decided that a shorter concert with just The Armed Man and the smaller orchestral accompaniment would be rescheduled for 7 May. We supplemented our numbers by inviting singers from Cradley Singers and Bromyard Choral Society for an afternoon workshop and to take part in the early evening concert. Their Musical Director, Kate Cheetham, received our invitation with enthusiasm and 16 of their singers plus 9 others who responded to our publicity joined 31 MFC members for a performance of this “Mass for Peace”. We were fortunate to be able to hold this event in Christ Church. The concert was memorable for the singing and accompaniment, and also for the dedication to the victims of the war in Ukraine. The closing collection raised £542 for the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

Our final event of the year went ahead as originally envisaged; a Come & Sing Messiah which took place in Holy Trinity Church on 25 June. Once again, 35 MFC singers were joined by 28 visiting singers, some of whom were from Leominster Choral Society, and accompanied by an ensemble of players, this time mainly from Birmingham Conservatoire, with four of their talented young soloists. For the May workshop and June Come & Sing, MFC members provided food for an afternoon tea which resulted in a magnificent spread on both occasions. Feedback from our visitors was that they had enjoyed a fantastic day of singing under Jonathan's baton and a warm welcome from MFC members together with an impressive spread at teatime. Our thanks to everyone who brought food contributions for the tea, to Bridget for organising it and to all the helpers on both days.

Throughout the season we were taking note of membership and singer numbers. Out of 62 paid-up members we had a total of around 50 singing in person and on Zoom. We decided we needed to find out from lapsed / inactive members what their intentions were with regard to singing with us again when rehearsals return to normal, or to possibly retiring. A further survey of just this cohort was conducted in February. Of those responding, around 15 are intending to return to singing with us. Although we didn't have replies from everyone, it was clear from these numbers that we face a major challenge to rebuild our membership, in order to once again perform the big choral works. Creating awareness that we are still going

and are back to rehearsing as normal will be vital to rebuilding our membership. We welcome everyone's help with this, starting with publicising the Open Rehearsal on 6 September.

Sad news of the deaths of two former members reached us during the season. Mary Strood sang alto with MFC for many years. Geoffrey Bradshaw was also a member for many years, along with his wife Gill, until ill-health forced his retirement. He also served as MFC Chairman in the 1980's. Condolences were sent to Mary and Geoffrey's families on behalf of the choir.

We have continued to keep MFC members, current and lapsed, informed via newsletters and email. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed to the newsletters, and particularly to Kevin for his regular updates and Bridget for compiling and editing the content.

There were few opportunities during the year to hold social and fundraising events. However, we reinstated the raffle at rehearsal in March and organised an end-of season garden party in Bridget Corlett's garden. The weather was good, and it was good too to have the opportunity to socialise whilst raising money to supplement choir funds. Thanks again to Bridget and to everyone who helped with the organisation and who came along to support us.

Finally, this record of the season wouldn't be complete without thanks to Jonathan and Penny for the joy of singing together, to Kevin, under whose leadership we have found ways to keep calm and carry on (singing) and to everyone who has supported us throughout the year.

As our thoughts turn to the new season, we are hoping for a more normal year in which we can welcome members new and old to rehearsals in St Edmunds Hall, Malvern College. We have an exciting programme of concerts in prospect, starting with a Christmas concert on 3 December in Christ Church. We look forward to seeing you at rehearsal on 6 September.

Barbara Moss – Secretary August 2022

Friends of Malvern Festival Chorus

The Friends of Malvern Festival Chorus was resurrected in the 2019/2020 year, which was not an ideal time to start anything. Having had the shutters come down on the world we tried to restart it this year but still things were too uncertain and, in the event, our much hoped for concerts did not take place in the form we had ideally planned. We managed to secure only one (spousal) Friend!

With lower numbers of members than before the pandemic, it is more important than ever that we try to secure support from outside the member body, so that we have a bigger pool to help us raise the money the Chorus needs to put on the concerts we want to (these orchestras and soloists sadly don't come free, or cheap!); and this is where the Friends come in.

Most members bring friends and relatives along to concerts and, if you have one or two 'regulars', they are the ideal candidates to become Friends. For their upfront payment they effectively pay in advance for a year of our main concert tickets and programmes with a small donation on top and, as a thank you, they receive a free interval drink, invitations to social events and the AGM, and an acknowledgement, should they wish, in the programme. The cost is a minimum of £45 (£80 for two at the same address) and fuller details can be found on the MFC website. Please do think about who you usually invite and ask if they would be interested.

Alternatively, a Member can become a Friend themselves and pass on (by gifting or selling) their complimentary tickets. This means that if you invite different people to concerts you can still support the choir in this way.

We would love to have a large 'family' of Friends who can feel part of MFC and help to support us, but we can only do that if you, the members, introduce us to them.

As ever, I am very happy to answer any questions you may have and my contact details are on the website.

Alice Osmond - Friends' Secretary July 2022
