

Minutes of the 2013 AGM of the Anton Bruckner Choir

Held at 2pm on 8 June 2013,
at University College School, Frognal, Hampstead, London NW3 6XH

21 members were present.

Minutes prepared by Gordon Banner

1. Approval of Minutes of 2012 AGM

Proposed by Pauline Thompson, seconded by Carolyn Steel, passed nem con.

2. Treasurer's report

Graham King reported good news – 2012 had been a good year, and we were on a sound financial footing.

He discussed points of interest in the accounts:

For the Bach *St Matthew Passion* concert at St John's Smith Square (SJSS), the income shown under "tickets" included a refund received from SJSS against excess charges for the organ. We had made a tiny profit on that concert – quite an achievement!

GiftAid: £1550 – included donations from December 2008-11 – we were now up to date – thanks due to Will Hale.

Making Music: our subscription to them (mainly for insurance) could vary in the future as they were changing their subscription model.

Debtors: as shown, SJSS owed us for the organ fee; that had now been paid.

Creditors: similarly the Making Music subscription falls due at the end of the year and had been paid shortly thereafter.

Rosemary Hadfield commented that the GiftAid portion of the profit for the year would not be repeated in future years, as this was several years' claim rolled into one.

Approval of the report was proposed by Frank Taylor, seconded by Phil Pratt, passed nem con.

3. Chairman's report

Alex Churchill thanked Graham for his report, remarking how important financial management is to any organisation like ours.

This was to be his last address as Chairman. In 2007 when he had taken on the role from Annie Wildman, he had found the choir in good shape, with a financial surplus and a SJSS concert in the first year. This year too had had a surplus of £3000 (thanks to HMRC!) and a successful SJSS concert. We needed to continue to maintain a good reserve, and focus on ticket sales.

He had had some trepidation at the start – taking on the role and becoming a trustee. However it had been very much a team effort and he wanted to thank Chris Dawe, the Committee and everyone involved in the performances.

In 2012 we had only had 2 concerts – no Christmas one as it would have been too rushed to fit in. The SJSS concert had completed our set of performances at that venue of Bach's major works (not to mention Handel's *Messiah*). We also had a superb concert at St Clement Dane's with the Tallis *Spem in Alium* and *Martin Mass* – and a lovely venue except for the toilets(!)

After that we had had a fallow period while Chris was settling into his new job. But now we should focus on the 2013 autumn concert.

There were many people to thank – not everyone who had helped could get mentioned. He thanked everyone on the Committee – Ann Stedman (now standing down) for venue organisation, Gordon Banner as Secretary, Lulu Chivers for general hard work and support, Graham for his excellent work as Treasurer, supported by Will Hale on GiftAid, and Richard Hubbard for an amazingly slick website, especially compared to other choirs.

He thanked Pauline in particular, who was reluctantly stepping down as Librarian; we owed her so much, for sorting out the right copies to the right people at the right time. She would be a very hard act to follow, and we wished her well.

He also thanked Chris for his energy, enthusiasm and skill – ABC would not be the choir it is without his dedication, leadership and vision.

Finally he thanked the whole choir for the wonderful time he had had as Chairman, in an interesting, challenging and rewarding role.

4. Musical Director's report

Chris welcomed us to University College School, in their new Lecture Theatre.

In 2012 we had only 2 concerts but it had been a successful year.

Regarding the *St Matthew Passion* – he recalled the first time we performed it, our first toe in the water, with choir members singing solos. This shows how far we had come – to a larger more polished choir. There couldn't be many choirs that would do it as well as us – between larger choral societies and smaller chamber choirs, we were in the sweet spot. Even our German pronunciation was improving! Orchestras were always impressed with our standards. It was also a good achievement to mount a high-cost concert and make a profit; we used to lose money in St Giles, so the move to SJSS (a larger venue) had been beneficial.

Smaller concerts were beginning to lose money – perhaps losing the sense of special occasion? However, the attraction of the *Spem in Alium* had reversed that – with over 60 singers in the choir and a bravura display, with Martin, Tallis and Swayne all in one programme!

That had been as large a choir as a “small gig” could be – 40 would be more normal. We don't want to overdo the Spem, but it's great as an occasion.

We would relaunch ourselves after the last year's hiatus with the Monteverdi *Vespers* in the autumn – our 3rd performance of this – which should get momentum going again. It was time to plan 2014 – the committee had discussed the pattern of concerts – 2 or 3 gigs per year? March and October are good, but summer or Christmas have problems.

We should go on a tour – perhaps do a SJSS concert one year, tour the other. There was a strong social imperative for this – it would give us quality time together, as people have families or move away from London.

2014 would be a year of smaller concerts – no SJSS – suggestions welcome – please look at the repertoire page on the website. Obviously we would always be re-using some items due to rehearsal limitations.

Chris looked forward to a bright future with the new Committee. Meanwhile he offered thanks to those departing – Ann Stedman after 4 or 5 years sorting things out behind the scenes. Pauline, an expert on gentle cajoling of the conductor, had put in many hours on the more complex concerts; meticulous and fantastically organised – it might be very hard to replace her and we might have to do things differently in future.

Many thanks to Alex, who had given 6 years of Chairmanship, even after the arrival of baby William (now aged 3!). Alex had overseen 3 SJSS concerts, continued financial success, and efficient running of meetings. We owed him a huge debt of thanks.

5. Appointment of Committee

Committee membership was proposed as on the agenda, except that Pauline was no longer able to stand.

Passed nem con.

Those elected were:

Music Director*	Chris Dawe
Chairman*	Samantha Job
Treasurer*	Graham King
Secretary*	Gordon Banner
Committee Member	Lulu Chivers
Committee Member	Carolyn Steel
Concert Manager	Phil Pratt

* indicates Trustees

Lulu wanted to add thanks to Sian Rees, who continued to run the Friends scheme.

Sam thanked us all for her election, and appealed for volunteers to help in the running of the choir.

John Catherall wondered if contact details for the committee members could be put on the website, perhaps in the members area.

6. AOB

6.1. Christmas concerts

Alex wanted to open a discussion about the annual schedule of concerts: the Christmas concert can be problematic for attendance, both choir and audience.

Charlotte Nicklin was in favour of doing a Christmas concert – perhaps we should consider whether weeknights are best for that? Gordon remarked that the City of London Choir held an annual carol concert at SJSS which sold far better than their other performances, with tickets selling out very quickly. Rosemary Hadfield thought that concerts by candlelight were often a popular selling point.

John Catherall reckoned that a concert close to Christmas, with something like Howells sung well, could have the biggest feel-good factor of anything we do. Sam reckoned a carol concert doesn't take too much rehearsal. Rosemary remarked that 1st Dec 2013 would be a Sunday – how about going for that to get “top of the list” advantage.

6.2. Touring

Charisse Amand asked if a tour year would only have one “home” concert (in London). Chris would like to have a pre-tour concert to consolidate the repertoire, so there would still be two concerts in our normal venues.

Sam asked for opinions on tours. The general response seemed favourable. However Gordon cautioned that those present (who had been dedicated enough to come for informal singing and AGM) must be the hardcore members – we would need to attract more people to make a tour feasible. Ruth Taylor said we should make it family-friendly to allow more people to come.

Rosemary wondered if we should start small, perhaps with a one-day trip somewhere out of London.

Chris remarked it would have to be in school holidays, perhaps summer or October half-term; also that we should get a tour organiser, rather than DIY – use professional specialists who would know the venues.

6.3. Repertoire

Rosemary suggested that repetition of repertoire might put off some of our audience; also wondered whether the 18-month cycle of concerts (between SJSS gigs) could be bad for calendaring, i.e. a fixed time of year might seem more regular. Chris thought the 18-month cycle was working all right so far, but accepted the point about repetition – at least we should mitigate by varying the combinations of items.

6.4. Presentation

The meeting concluded with a presentation to Alex and Pauline, and a final vote of thanks to them both.