



Salisbury Musical Society

www.salisburymusicalsociety.org.uk



ANNUAL REPORT

AND

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2017

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Members of the Salisbury Musical Society will be held at **SOUTH WILTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, STRATFORD ROAD, SALISBURY** on **Tuesday 03 OCTOBER 2017 at 7.30 pm** for the following purposes :-

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To consider and approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
3. To receive Reports from the Chairman, Conductor, Assistant Conductor and Treasurer in respect of the year ended 31 July 2017
4. To receive the Statement of Accounts for that year
5. To appoint an Independent Examiner
6. To elect the Officers
7. To elect Ordinary Members of the Committee
8. To consider the Revised Programmes for Seasons 2017/2018 AND 2018/2019 and the choice of Works for Season 2019/2020
9. To appoint the Voice Representatives
10. To consider Any Other Business

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

Sue Blyth
..... (Secretary)

24 August 2017
..... (Date)

SALISBURY MUSICAL SOCIETY

The Committee presents its Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2017.

CONSTITUTION

The Society was founded in 1923 by Sir Walter Alcock and is registered as a Charity with the Charity Commissioners under the Number 266461. The Society is governed by a Constitution adopted by the Members on 12 October 1999. The Registered Office of the Society is 5 Netheravon Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP1 3BJ.

PRINCIPAL OBJECT

The principal object of the Society is to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The review of the activities of the Society during the year is given in the separate reports of the Chairman, the Conductor, the Assistant Conductor and the Treasurer which are included on pages 11 - 16 of this Annual Report.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Members of the Committee (being the Charity Trustees) who served during the year ended 31 July 2017 were :-

Officers

Mrs J Burridge
Mr R Bexon
Mrs S Blyth

Chairman
Treasurer
Secretary

Ordinary Members

Dr H Brown
Mrs J Podkolinski
Mr L Rose
Miss C Spencer
Mr N Stiven
Mrs D Verdon-Smith

(From 07-10-2014)
(From 07-10-2014)
(From 04-10-2016)
(From 04-10-2016)
(From 07-10-2014)
(From 06-10-2015)

All the Officers and Ordinary Members will retire at the conclusion of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting; Mr L Rose and Mrs D Verdon-Smith will be eligible for re-election as Ordinary Members and can be nominated, Miss C Spencer will be nominated Hon Treasurer Elect. As regards Ordinary Members there will be six vacancies to be filled. Nominations by Members of the Society for any appointment as an Officer or Ordinary Member must be made in writing, supported by a seconder and delivered to the Secretary by not later than **26 September 2017**. Nomination forms can be obtained on application to the Secretary.

CO-OPTED COMMITTEE MEMBER

NONE

ADVISER TO THE COMMITTEE

Mr D Halls, the Conductor and Mr I Wicks, the Assistant Conductor, attended meetings of the Committee during the year in an advisory capacity.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

Sue Blyth

..... (Secretary)

24 August 2017

..... (Date)

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SALISBURY MUSICAL SOCIETY
HELD AT SOUTH WILTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, STRATFORD ROAD, SALISBURY
ON TUESDAY 05 OCTOBER 2016

Mrs Jane Burridge, the Chairman, opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were received from nine Members and eight Patrons.

2. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting

(a) Mr John Powell proposed and Mrs Christine Sprott seconded a motion that the Minutes, as published in the Annual Report, should be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record. This motion was carried by a show of hands.

(b) Matters Arising. Question from Mr Philip Corp - Low price tickets for under 18's. The Chairman stated no decision yet from the Committee about how to organise it; probably tickets will be sold at the door only - information to be put on publicity. Mr John Powell, Ticket Manager, said it was implemented at the last concert but there were no takers!

3. Reports from Chairman, Conductor and Treasurer

The Chairman had the following to add to her report :

(a) Draw attention to the survey done about where people heard about concerts. Very obvious that it was via Choir Members - word of mouth. Mrs Burridge asked members to send pdf posters out to as many friends and family as possible.

(b) Use of IT information - SMS needed an IT Manager and urged someone in the Choir to volunteer. (Post Meeting : Mrs Lorraine Blakey has agreed to take on this task - as IT Co-ordinator).

The Conductor, Assistant Conductor nor the Treasurer had anything to add to their reports.

Adoption of all four Reports was then proposed by Mrs Lorraine Blakey, seconded by Mrs Sarah Locke and carried by a show of hands.

4. Adoption of the Statement of Accounts

The Treasurer said there were a few things to say :

(a) Come and Sing - some costs were in the accounts for Season 2015/2016 : some in the accounts for the following Season. Mr Bexon said no Invoice had yet been received from the Cathedral for 3 September; this C & S not expected to be as profitable as previous year - more expenses.

(b) No Gift Aid claim this year, - usually about £3K. Mr Bexon said he could see the way the accounts were going, so the next submission will be delayed.

(c) The cost of maintenance of the Website will be in the accounts for next Season.

(d) A Member had asked who the Trustees were - Mr Bexon said that in accordance with Charity Law, it means members of the Committee.

(e) Mr Bexon said there was no need to raise Members subscriptions for Season 2017/2018.

There were no questions for the Treasurer.

Adoption of the Statement of Accounts was proposed by Mrs Anne Blevins, seconded by Mrs Muriel Dagg and carried by a show of hands. The Chairman thanked Mr Bexon, on behalf of the Society, for the amount of work he does in managing the finances of the Choir.

5. The Appointment of an Independent Examiner

The Treasurer confirmed that Mr Harry Brockway was willing to continue. His appointment as Independent Examiner was proposed by Mrs Clare Tawney, seconded by Mrs Jean Briggs and carried by a show of hands.

6. Election of Officers

The Treasurer took the Chair; he thanked Mrs Burridge for all the work she does for the Choir, fitting it in with her University work. Mr Bexon reported that only one nomination had been received for the position of Chairman :

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Mrs Jane Burridge	Mr Les Rose	Mr Colin Reed

The election of Mrs Burridge was accepted with acclamation.

Mrs Burridge resumed the Chair and reported that only one nomination for each of the positions of Secretary and Treasurer had been received :

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Mrs Sue Blyth	Mr John Clipson	Ms Sonia Woolley
Mr Roy Bexon	Mr Jon Hampton	Mr John Foster

Their election as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, was accepted with acclamation.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary, Mrs Sue Blyth, for continuing to steer the Choir through another Season, saying that things work like clockwork.

7. Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee

The Chairman thanked Elected Members of the Committee - Mrs Nicki Bond (Wine and Nibbles); Dr Hilary Brown (Raffle); Mrs Sarah Locke (Wine and Nibbles); Mrs Jane Podkolinski (Librarian); Mr Nick Stiven (Concert Manager); Mr Di Verdon-Smith (Publicity).

Position of Librarian : Mrs Podkolinski will be retiring from the Choir after the June 2017 concert.

We need someone to "shadow" her from January 2017 and then take over as Librarian in September 2017.

(Post Meeting : Mrs Lindsay Devine has agreed to take over the position of Librarian, with help from Mrs Allannah Daniel and Mrs Anna McElwaine)

The Chairman thanked :

Mrs Heather Bache (Orchestra Hospitality); Mr John Foster (Music Stand); Mrs Gillian Gailey (The '100 Club'); Mr Jon Hampton (Programme Notes and Gift Aid); Mrs Mandy Hollywood (Seating Plan); Mr Stephen Lycett (Programme Editor and Posters); Mr John Powell (Tickets); Mrs Caroline Probert (Hosting our Soloists); Mrs Beth Smith (Assistant Secretary/Minute Secretary); Ms Sonia Woolley (Warm-ups).

The Chairman reported that six nominations for the six vacancies had been received :

	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Seconded</u>
Dr Hilary Brown	Miss Mary White	Mrs Kate Henderson
Mrs Jane Podkolinski	Mrs Di Verdon-Smith	Mrs Anne Foster
Mr Les Rose	Mr Philip Corp	Mr Mike Rooke
Ms Christa Spencer	Mr Roy Bexon	Mrs Sue Blyth
Mr Nick Stiven	Mr Colin Reed	Mrs Anne Foster
Mrs Di Verdon-Smith	Ms Sonia Woolley	Mrs Jane Podkolinski

The Chairman invited them to stand to identify themselves.

The Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee was carried by a show of hands. The Chairman thanked them all for standing.

8. Revised Programmes for Seasons 2016/2017 and 2017/2018
Proposed Works for Season 2018/2019

Mr Halls set out the revised programme of works for 2016/2017 and 2017/2018, and the proposed works for 2018/2019, as follows :

Season 2016/2017 - Revised Programme

19 November 2016	Durufié Elgar Vaughan Williams Butterworth Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra	Requiem For the Fallen Toward the Unknown Region The Banks of Green Willow
01 April 2017	Elgar Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra	The Kingdom
24 June 2017	Mendelssohn Salisbury Symphony Orchestra	Elijah
02 September 2017	Haydn	Creation : Come and Sing

Season 2017/2018 - Revised Programme

18 November 2017	Vaughan Williams Handel Purcell Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra	Sea Symphony Zadok the Priest Chaconne (or similar Baroque work)
17 March 2018	Bach Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra	St Matthew Passion (In English)
23 June 2018	Monteverdi Salisbury Symphony Orchestra	Vespers of 1610

Proposed Works for Season 2018/2019

10 or 17 November 2018 Britten War Requiem
Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra

(Post Meeting : Remembrance Sunday on 11 November 2018 - The Cathedral would be pleased if SMS performed the War Requiem on Saturday 10 November 2018)

06 April 2019 Mozart Mass in C Minor
Bach Cantata (With Lenten theme)
Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra

22 June 2019 Haydn Paukenmesse
L'Estrange Zimbe
Salisbury Symphony Orchestra

Mr Halls said all the above recommendations from the Music Sub-Committee had been displayed on the Notice Board over the past few weeks.

The Chairman put the recommendations to the Meeting : Mrs Susan Daniell proposed and Mr Ian Colvin seconded that the Revised Programmes for Seasons 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 and the Proposed Programme for Season 2018/2019 be accepted. This was carried by a show of hands.

Mrs Burridge thanked Mr Halls and Mr Wicks for their expertise and for inspiring us over the past Season.

The Chairman thanked the Patrons for their continued loyal support; Mr Peter Grove our Accompanist and Mr Chris Daniel and his Team of Stewards.

9. Appointment of Voice Representatives

The Chairman reported that all the present Voice Representatives were happy to continue for another Season. She thanked them all on behalf of the Society.

10. Members who had left the Choir during Season 2015/2016 :

S1 - 2; S2 - 1; A1 - 4; A2 - 2; T1 - 1; B1 - 1; B2 - 2

11. Any Other Business

Mrs Julia Sharpe - Would the Choir consider updating the Concert Dress? Possibly all black for Ladies : Black Trousers and Shirts for Men or Black Trousers, White shirt with normal coloured tie.

The Chairman asked if the Meeting would like the Committee to consider the above suggestions. A 50 : 50 show of hands for the Committee to discuss and decide.

(Post Meeting : At the Committee Meeting of 5 October 2016 detailed discussion took place - it was agreed that there should be no change to the present dress code).

The Meeting closed at 8.09 pm.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

..... *Sue Blyth* (Secretary) *15 October 2016* (Date)

Independent examiner's report on the accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of **Salisbury Musical Society**

On accounts for the year ended **31 July 2017**

Charity no **266461**

Set out on pages **9 and 10**

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. [The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [named body]]. *Delete [] if not applicable.*

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

20th August 2017

Name:

HARRY CHARLES BROCKWAY

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address:

11 JUNIPER DRIVE

SALISBURY

SP1 3RA

SALISBURY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Receipts and Payments Accounts

Year Ended 31 July 2017

	Payments		Receipts	
Performance Account				
Soloists and conductor	1500.00	Elgar 3420.00	Durufle 6599.94	Mendelssohn 6425.44
Orchestra	5570.00	4268.00	540.85	733.00
Printing & advertising	1070.20	1258.10		
Cathedral Hire	3128.00	3822.60		750.00
Music hire (orchestral)	728.13	298.40		
Miscellaneous	60.00	60.00		
PRF	380.16		5295.70	1318.10
	12436.49	13127.10	13127.10	8476.54
Loss on:				
Durufle	5295.70		0.00	
Elgar	4985.90			
Mendelssohn	1318.10			
Advertisements re all concerts	274.01		11873.71	
	11873.71		11873.71	
General Account				
Conductor's honorarium	1950.00			15202.50
Assistant conductor's honorarium	1125.00			2039.00
Accompanist's honorarium	1670.00			1000.00
Miscellaneous honoraria	517.00			499.00
NFMS membership fee	480.00			
Hire of rehearsal rooms	2371.00			
Music hire/purchase	821.16		368.00	
PRS 2015-16	466.84		55.96	312.04
Annual Reports	132.50			853.00
Secretary's expenses	140.00			25.00
Flowers	50.00			248.00
Orchestral music 2017-18	550.50			105.00
Web site hosting	2119.44			439.00
				283.18
				3161.65
				3796.54
				680.50
				3460.00
Come & Sing 2016	3701.80			
Come & Sing 2017	389.1			
	11873.71			

Net General Account receipts	15620.07			
	<u>32104.41</u>			<u>32104.41</u>
Summary of net receipts and payments				
Balance as above:				
General account net receipts	15620.07		56392.34	
Performance Account net payments	11873.71		<u>3746.36</u>	<u>60138.70</u>
Total Net Gain for the year	<u>3746.36</u>			<u>60138.70</u>

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Cash balance at 31 July 2016	56392.34			
<u>Add Net Gain for the year</u>	<u>3746.36</u>		<u>60138.70</u>	
Net Assets - 31 July 2017				<u>60138.70</u>
				(subject to Notes 2 and 3)

Notes

1. The Cash Balances at 31 July 2017 were held at:

Lloyds Bank on Current Account	28867.22
Lloyds Deposit Account	5032.49
Lloyds Fixed Term Deposit Account	20000.00
COIF Account	<u>6738.99</u>
	<u>60138.70</u>

2. No account has been taken of:

- a: subscriptions due but not received from members
- b: income tax recoverable in respect of years ended 31 July 2016 and 31 July 2017..
- c: the value of a rostrum and stocks of ties, stationery, folders and music

3. No provision has been made for PRS Fees still payable for the year.

4. The Charity's Policy on Reserves is to hold sufficient cash to cover the cost of the coming Season's concerts..

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE



Roy Bexon
(Hon Treasurer)

20 Aug 17

TREASURER'S REPORT

This is my final annual report to you as your Treasurer. You will know that I have decided that I should hang up my calculator after about 43 years in the job. I only took it on as a temporary measure! We have a very competent replacement waiting in the wings to be elected at the AGM in October, so I leave the finances in very good hands. We have been doing a detailed handover for nearly a year.

Overall, we increased our value by about £3,746 through our activities during the year as shown in the table below. Our audiences have remained stubbornly in the low 400s, except for the Elijah where we hit 460. This inevitably puts pressure on the finances because the costs of the first two concerts are now typically over £12,000 each, with the third costing about £8,500. This led this Season to a concert loss of some £11,873 despite an injection of £750 in sponsorship from the Elgar Society.

Item	Season 80/81	Season 13/14	Season 14/15	Season 15/16	Season 16/17
Ticket Sales	3,694.65	19,068.37	14,696.18	23,522.66	19,667.06
Retiring Collections	348.38	1,871.76	1,344.33	1,730.41	2,023.37
Concert Income	4,603.03	20,940.13	16,040.51	26,753.07	22,440.43
Concert Expenses	5,801.84	34,517.44	25,198.76	34,792.80	34,040.13
Soloists	1,578.00	8,782.00	6,515.00	10,000.00	8,245.00
Performance Loss	1,177.02	13,577.62	9,261.37	8,129.98	11,873.71
General Account Surplus	1,999.04	15,612.43	14,533.98	13,867.31	15,620.07
Profit (Loss) on Season	910.68	2,034.81	5,272.61	5,737.33	3,746.36
Cash assets	6,432.92	45,280.90	50,655.01	56,392.34	60,138.70

As usual we offset these significant concert losses with a healthy excess in our General Account. This year we have reclaimed two Seasons' worth of Gift Aid – for years 2013-14 and 2014-15 - with 2015-16 in the pipeline. We also took advantage of the HMRC Gift Aid Small Donations scheme, where we can claim the Gift Aid on our retiring collections. Since these collections are about £1,500-2,000 annually this amounts to an extra £300 or so per Season and you will see from the accounts that we have claimed two years so far. We received welcome income from our "Come and Sing" though the attendance was lower than our first event in 2015. We also had the benefit of £439 from the Waitrose token scheme and a bequest from the family of Bryan Raynor. The Hundred Club returned its usual contribution and we had a new Life Patron. The annual summer social returned £312 after a huge amount of effort by a small number of people; sadly their efforts were not as well supported by the choir as they should have been.

On the General Account costs side, the costs of rehearsal venues remain a significant part of our expenditure, and we had a greater variety of conductors at rehearsals, resulting in higher costs there. But overall the General Account costs contain no surprises.

As a result, the General Account showed a healthy surplus of £15,620, giving the overall Season a net gain of £3,746 – effectively the second HMRC Gift Aid Claim. The Society is therefore holding its own in its current operation and the level of subscription is about right provided we maintain our audience size. The SMS represents excellent value for money for members and audience alike.

In the first column above I have included for comparison the corresponding data for the Season 1980/81 – about 6 years into my tenure. You will see that the data has many similarities to today's but the one item (not shown) that is different is that the audience numbers were generally significantly higher than they are now.

In my time as Treasurer I have served under seven Chairmen and Chairwomen and five Secretaries. Unless you have held one of these offices you have no idea how demanding they are and how much work is done for free on your behalf. Of them all, I will mention one in particular. I have worked with Sue Blyth, our current secretary, for well over 20 years and it has been a great privilege to have done so. Her organisational skills and work behind the scenes have been extraordinary and I am particularly grateful to her for her friendship, support and encouragement.

My thanks go also to many others, who I will not name, who have helped me in my role and made being an officer of this Society such a pleasure and privilege. My thanks also go to the small but essential band of workers behind the scenes who make it all happen. I wish the Society all the very best for the future.

Roy BEXON
Hon Treasurer

Governance Statement

The Trustees have taken note of the Charity Commission's Guidance on Public Benefit in undertaking its activities. They have also assessed the risks to which the Charity is exposed, including operational and financial risks. In the opinion of the Trustees the Charity has established resources and review systems which, under normal conditions, should allow the risks identified to be mitigated to an acceptable level in its day to day operation.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I think it is generally agreed that the standard of our singing continues to rise and we have received some excellent reviews. This year we have given outstanding performances of Duruflé's Requiem and Vaughan Williams' Towards an Unknown Region in November, Elgar's The Kingdom in April and Mendelssohn's Elijah in June. That said, our numbers remain the lowest they have been in a long while and we are especially short of Tenors and Basses. We also need to attract new members especially younger singers, from a wider sector of society, for the Choir to continue to thrive and be large enough to sing all the major choral repertoire.

We are very sad to be saying goodbye to Ian Wicks and, of course, to his wife Elizabeth who has sung with the Choir for 17 years. In 2012 we realised we needed an Assistant Conductor to support David. It was decided that he/she should conduct the Summer concert and take rehearsals during the Summer term. Ian has not only done this but taken on conducting our highly successful series of "Come and Sing". Ian's lively and enjoyable rehearsals have given great pleasure to us all and our performance of Elijah, under his baton and with his training, was simply stunning and the topic of conversation among the Choir and beyond for many weeks. Our "Come and Sing" performance of Haydn's Creation will be our last - they have been a very successful outreach activity, raised income and attracted new members but it is now time to think of other ways to do this.

We also say goodbye to Jane Podkolinski who has done a fantastic job as Librarian for the last three years. Her calm and quietly organised way of running the library has been appreciated by everyone. For a while we were worried that no one in the Choir felt able to follow her and take on the job, but thankfully Lindsay Devine has picked up the baton (don't worry David, not yours) and has been trained in the job. We welcome her and her supporting team - Allannah Daniel and Anna McElwaine - and thank them for their willingness to take on this demanding and very important role. Jane will be leaving the Choir too and we are very sorry to see her go.

And the really big goodbye is to Roy Bexon. Two years ago Roy announced that he was hanging up his spreadsheet and retiring as Treasurer of SMS at the 2017 AGM, a job he has done since 1975. He is proposing, he says, to become "just a regular member of the Choir". We thank you Roy and we will be saying that in an appropriate way shortly. During the last year, Roy has been working closely with Christa Spencer to whom he has passed on 42 years of experience. Thank you, Christa, we know we are in safe hands with your professional experience, dedication and energy.

Our Website has caused a real headache this year, just as we were getting Members to use it more and to use it to take the burden off the planet (and Sue). It has been a great asset to the Choir, but the software was outdated and became a target for hackers who posted embarrassingly unacceptable content on our pages! It had to come down and quickly and despite a few attempts to fix it, we all agreed we needed to invest in a new and up-to-date secure Website. These days the Website is the first place people look to if they want to join a Choir, see what is going on and book tickets for concerts; so, we all agreed that this needed to be done well. We are extremely grateful to an amazing IT team, led by Les Rose, that has seen this big project through - from putting the design out-to-tender, selecting the best designer and working with him and the Committee to design the structure and pages. As I am sure you will all agree, the new Website looks fantastic. It is not yet fully functioning, but when it is people will be able to buy concert tickets online and link the calendar, which contains all the rehearsal dates and venues, to your own electronic calendar, if you use one. No excuse for forgetting a rehearsal! We will be able to use the Website to replace almost all of what is currently done on paper - hurray for the planet! I would like to thank all the IT team, Roy Bexon, Les Rose, Christa Spencer and especially Lorraine Blakey who has taken on the very important role of IT co-ordinator. We are also building up our use of Social Media and thank Lorraine for taking on the responsibility for our Facebook page and Twitter account. Our Website and increased use of Social Media will enable us to sell concert tickets, attract new members, reduce the use of paper and relieve effort for everyone. We hope you embrace it.

Last year I reported that our proposed collaboration with Saintes had fallen through. We were all disappointed not least because we, especially Di Verdon-Smith and Nick Stiven, had put a lot of effort into arranging it. I am pleased to report, however, that it looks as if we may be visiting in the Spring to sing at the Abbaye aux Dames as part of the Saintes Choir Festival. Nothing is certain yet, but we will keep everyone informed.

In 2018, we are performing Benjamin Britten's iconic War Requiem on 10 November - the eve of the 100th Anniversary of Armistice Day. This concert will be very special and we working closely with the Cathedral to make it a joint venture. We are planning to engage top class soloists and make it a stunning visual and acoustic performance. We are hoping to fill the Cathedral.

Following our very successful performances of the Verdi Requiem in Guildford and Salisbury in March 2016 with Guildford Choral Society, we are now planning to join forces again for the Monteverdi Vespers in 2019.

Audience numbers have continued to improve slightly, but we still need to increase our numbers and attract new people. We have now created a database so that we can keep in touch with people who enjoy coming to our concerts and the new Website will support this. Di Verdon-Smith has worked extraordinarily hard at publicising the Choir and our concerts, making sure that we capitalise on all opportunities. Large banners around Salisbury, articles in local magazine, such as Wiltshire Life and the Blackmore Vale News, as well as the Salisbury Journal.

As always, I would like to use my Annual Report to thank those members of the Choir who do so much to make it work and whose efforts are often taken for granted. Sue Blyth works tirelessly on our behalf and we are as always extraordinarily grateful to her. Your Committee too, work hard to run the Choir and we are always keen to encourage new members of the Choir to stand for election. I would like to thank John and Anne Foster for running the "100 Club" and agreeing to carry on doing so for another year; Jon Hampton for the work he does to ensure we make the most of "Gift Aid" and for writing the concert Programme notes; Stephen Lycett who continues to design and produce our publicity material and the concert Programme and Sonia Woolley for her excellent warm-up session that always focus on just the right things to improve all aspects of our performance. These people and others I have not mentioned contribute greatly to the running of the Choir, but we need more people to play a part. We would like your ideas and your help, so please do not hesitate to speak to me or anyone on the Committee - we are always interested to hear your ideas, we would really welcome your support.

Many members of the Choir say how much they enjoy the social side of SMS and the Committee are very happy to put on events, such as the Summer Party, but may be we need some new ideas. If you have any please do tell us. SMS is not just a Choir; social events like the Summer Party (this year it rained but we still had a very good time) are an important part of the life of the Society. They take a fair bit of organising by Sue's remarkable team, so it would be very helpful if you could tell us what social events you would like in the future and would be interested in supporting.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support to me over the past Season, which has made being your Chairman so enjoyable and rewarding.

Jane BURRIDGE
Chairman

CONDUCTOR'S REPORT

The Season started with a "Come and Sing" Mozart Requiem directed by Ian Wicks and proved to be a very enjoyable occasion. Ian will comment further about it in his Report.

The SMS concert in Salisbury Cathedral on 19 November 2016 featured a number of works by Butterworth, Duruflé, Elgar and Vaughan Williams. For the Duruflé, SMS was joined by the baritone Alistair Watson, the soprano Pollyanna Hewetson, the organist John Challenger and the Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra. It was a most memorable performance with a huge range of dynamic and stylistic contrasts from Choir and Orchestra. SMS carried off its important part well, with fine, robust singing when required and exposed yet confidently sung unaccompanied passages as well.

In April 2017, our collaboration with COG continued in the Season's next concert, Elgar's *The Kingdom*, a relatively under-appreciated and rarely performed work. SMS had rehearsed throughout the Lent Term particularly well so I was not at all surprised by the excellence of the performance. The four soloists all made telling contributions although it was the chorus which was inevitably the real star, especially in the longer, set piece movements.

The Season's third concert, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* took place in June 2017, when SMS was accompanied by the Salisbury Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Ian Wicks. As a member of the audience, I was delighted with the way both Choir and Orchestra worked together in this intricate score. Ian will write further about this concert.

So, in summary, this was a remarkable Season and I end by thanking Ian Wicks for his contribution, Peter Grove for his skilful accompanying and I sincerely thank all members of the Choir.

David HALLS
Conductor

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR'S REPORT

In early September 2016 our "Come and Sing" event was a performance of Mozart Requiem. Our soloists were ex-Salisbury Chorister and member of The Sixteen, Camilla Harris (Soprano); alumnus of St John's College, Cambridge, Tom Blackie (Alto); current King's Singer, Julian Gregory (Tenor) and our own Decani Bass, Alistair Watson (Bass). The Mozart Requiem is a well known work and the singers had a good corporate knowledge of the notes. However, the spread out nature of the Choir in the nave of the Cathedral meant that ensemble was always going to be difficult and we spent time in the afternoon learning to sing together. The performance was exciting and went well with just a few moments where ensemble was not so well managed. Our soloists sang with distinction and added greatly to the performance and to our enjoyment of the occasion. David Halls provided his customary strong and sympathetic accompaniment on the organ, for which we were all grateful.

In the Summer term 2017 we performed Mendelssohn's great oratorio 'Elijah' with the Salisbury Symphony Orchestra. The rehearsals with the SMS were very enjoyable. The music was, again, well known to many and this meant that we were able to work on the detail in each movement aiming to bring out not only Mendelssohn's beautiful melodies but above all the drama and excitement in this through careful work on diction and articulation. The performance was a complete triumph with choir, orchestra and soloists all rising to the occasion to produce a dramatic portrayal of the story which spoke vividly to the large audience. Our quintet of soloists, Mhairi Lawson (Soprano), Oliver Field (Treble), Caitlin Hulcup (Mezzo-Soprano), Nick Pritchard (Tenor) and Matthew Brook (Bass) were wonderful. Matthew Brook, in particular, as Elijah communicated superbly with both the choir and the audience, bringing the character to life in a performance that brought the audience to their feet in tribute. The Salisbury Symphony Orchestra with their inspiring Leader, Rosamund Bromley, accompanied the drama of this story with excellent playing in all departments. A final mention should go to Oliver Field (Treble) who was sent up to his lookout tower of staging to sing his crucial part with fearless skill.

I should like to end by thanking Peter Grove for his skilful accompaniment of our rehearsals and David Halls for his constant support. Finally, as I stand down from the role of Assistant Conductor of the SMS at the end of 2017, I would like to thank the Society for their fellowship and above all for their singing in the concerts and rehearsals that I have conducted. It has been a privilege to be your Assistant Conductor and I wish the Society well for its future concerts.

Ian WICKS
Assistant Conductor

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