

Newsletter: March 31st 2015.

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we record the loss of 2 people who have each played a very important part in the life of the Society over many years, and it seems fitting to start our Newsletter with an acknowledgement and expression of deep appreciation of all they contributed to the Society: and with an expression of sincere condolences to their families and friends.

ROY DOUGLAS

Roy Douglas became President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society in the late 1980s and continued in that office until his death on March 23rd 2015. He took a great interest in all our activities and always attended our concerts as long as he was able. In 2007 we sang Haydn's Creation, his favourite choral work, in his presence in the Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall, in honour of his 100th birthday.

Roy was a most distinguished musician, both on his own account and in support of other great British composers, notably Ralph Vaughan Williams and William Walton. He was almost the only person who could decipher RVW's handwriting. On one occasion he asked whether a particular note was B natural or B flat, to which the answer was 'Yes'. Roy was left to exercise his own judgement. The full score of Walton's Belshazzar's Feast, published by OUP, was printed as a facsimile of Roy's beautifully handwritten manuscript copy. The ballet music, *Les Sylphides*, was devised and arranged by Roy from Chopin's piano music.

Roy was born in Tunbridge Wells and went to school here. Later he lived elsewhere in Kent and in London, returning to Tunbridge Wells in 1944. He became a well-known figure, riding round Tunbridge Wells on his motor-bike, until he was well into his 80s. He was never too proud to join in with local music-making. On many occasions he played timpani in the Choral Society's orchestra, and he also enjoyed taking part in local amateur dramatics. In the last few years, when he was no longer able to attend concerts himself, he was very appreciative when members of the Choral Society went to his home to sing carols in celebration both of his birthday and of Christmas.

Right up to his last day he enjoyed his daily whisky and his pipe, as well as the music that was his life. In addition to being President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society Roy was also President of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra. Very many local musicians, as well as the wider musical world, owe Roy a huge debt of gratitude.

Helen MacNab

Sir DEREK DAY

Derek had a highly distinguished career in the Diplomatic Service including service as Great Britain's High Commissioner (Ambassador) in Canada. He was, along with his wife Sheila, for many years a singing member of the Society and a reliable and inspirational stalwart of the Tenor section

After ceasing to sing a few years ago he and Sheila continued to support RTWCS in various ways including as Patrons of the Society, invariably attending our concerts and, when possible, social events right up to the time of his death on March 7th. Despite his severe and terminal illness many members had the pleasure of seeing him at the last Goudhurst Christmas concert - albeit in a wheelchair - but as cheerful and charming as ever. Our deepest sympathy goes to Sheila and the family along with fond memories of this delightful man who epitomised all that is best about being a member of the Society. He will be very greatly missed.

Guy Huntrods

The Society has decided to dedicate its April 26th performance of the St Matthew Passion to the memory of Sir Derek

A VERY WARM WELCOME to our NEW MEMBERS:

All 4 voice-sections have welcomed new Members in recent weeks, and we are delighted to have you all with us, and hope you enjoy the experience. If you have any questions or concerns at all, please contact your voice-section Leader.....or any Committee Member.

REHEARSAL DETAILS for the rest of the Season:

- April 6th Easter - no rehearsal
- April 13th St John's as normal
- April 20th rehearsal at *King Charles the Martyr Church Hall*
- April 23rd THURSDAY St John's CHURCH from 7.15pm to 9.45 pm
- April 26th Final rehearsal: Assembly Hall Theatre 10.00 to 13.00hrs
- April 27th St John's as normal
- May 4th Bank holiday – no rehearsal
- May 11th St John's as normal
- May 18th St John's CHURCH – normal times
- May 25th Bank holiday – no rehearsal
- June 1st St John's as normal
- June 8th St John's as normal
- June 15th St John's as normal LAST REHEARSAL OF THE SEASON
- **SEPTEMBER 7TH St John's as normal - NEW SEASON BEGINS**

April 26th Concert: *St Matthew Passion* – Assembly Hall Theatre:

- **Ticket sales - Message from the Chairman**
 - Time is running out, and we all need to apply our efforts to selling as many tickets as possible for what promises to be a dramatic presentation of one of the great choral masterpieces.
 - Our aim remains for every choir member to sell at least 4 tickets and it is vital that we all take this on board. This will be an expensive concert to put on but more importantly I am sure your family and friends will enjoy the experience of seeing and hearing this great work performed. So let's pull out all the stops to ensure this concert will be a great success!
- **Timetable:**
 - Members are asked to take their places by 9.45 a.m. - ready to start the rehearsal punctually at 10.00 a.m.
 - Rebecca will release the choir by 1.00pm – but will continue to rehearse with the soloists and orchestra. Members are therefore asked to leave as quietly as possible and avoid disturbing the rest of the rehearsal.
 - Please then reassemble backstage by 2.45pm latest, ready for the start of the performance at 3.00pm
- **Normal Concert Dress:**
 - Ladies: black skirts or trousers, black long-sleeved tops; if worn, jewellery should be unobtrusive.
 - Men: dinner jackets or dark lounge suits, black bow tie, white shirts.
- **Our standard black folders** should be used to cover the scores. For Members who don't have one Diana – our Librarian - will have them available for sale at rehearsals on April 13th and 20th at their cost to the Society – which is £5

- **Seating Plan** for the Choir:
 - Because of the unusual layout of the choir for this concert [2 separate choirs – plus positioning of all performers on the floor of the Hall rather than the stage] – we will need to have a carefully planned and executed way of coming “on-stage” and leaving [both at the start of the work and at the interval]
- Pieces which are to be “cut” – and “sits and stands” and miscellaneous directions - will be published separately very shortly.
- **Programme Sellers:** we still need more volunteers to sell programmes for the Concert: as well as helping audience members enjoy the work to the full, this is another important source of revenue.
 - Ideally we are looking for volunteers who will NOT be singing in the Concert, so that they can continue to stay “front of the house” until the last minute.....which is always the busiest time.
 - So please ask friends or family members whether they can help – they will need to be present from 2.15pm on the day
 - details of volunteers to **Michael Selway** please.

OTHER TOPICS

Summer social:

- We have once again been very kindly invited by Mr & Mrs W. Rutherford to a Garden Party at their home in Frant.
- It will take place on Saturday June 20th from 3.00pm onwards: more details will be announced nearer the time.
- Members plus their friends and family are invited to attend – and we shall be singing a selection of pieces from *The Greatest Choral Classics* that we shall be rehearsing from April 27th onwards.

***The Armed Man* from scratch: Sunday July 12th at 7.00pm**

- Members may be interested to know that this Jenkins work is being staged by *The Really Big Chorus*.....as one of their well known “from scratch” performances at The Royal Albert Hall on Sunday July 12th.
- Rehearsals will be 11.00 am and 2.30 pm on the day
- Liz Ford [alto Section Leader] can provide more details

Assistance still required by our Publicity Manager – Melissa Richards:

- Some weeks ago we circulated an appeal on behalf of Melissa for Members willing to help Melissa in several areas of her [wide!] portfolio of responsibilities.
- So far she has had offers of help with online listings – many thanks – but volunteers are still sought in all the other areas.
- Someone able to offer a few hours work over the summer to plan a distribution strategy for posters and leaflets would be especially helpful.
 - It calls for someone to compile lists of places to target in the different areas of Tunbridge Wells and surroundings as a framework against which any Members can then put their names if they are willing to distribute publicity materials in a particular area.