



NEWSLETTER

2007 - 2008

Number 34

1 September 2007

WELLS CATHEDRAL ORATORIO SOCIETY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE AS AT 10 SEPTEMBER 2007

Members may contact officers by phone, letter or email as shown below:

Chairman:	Dennis Johnson (bass)	01934 712656
	Bockingford House, Westham, Wedmore BS28 4UX	
	email: <i>dennis@bockingford.fsnet.co.uk</i>	
Hon. Treasurer:	David Cooke (bass)	01934 742768
	Pilgrim's Rest, Cliff Street, Cheddar BS27 3PN	
	email: <i>david.cookebs27@btopenworld.com</i>	
Hon. Secretary:	Mrs Jane James (alto)	01749 674800
	13 Penn Close, Wells BA5 3JQ	
	email: <i>janejames.wcos@yahoo.co.uk</i>	
Librarians:	Mrs Maureen Pickford (sop) & Alan Rayfield (bass)	
Programmes:	Mrs Jane Mayers (soprano)	
Publicity:	Mrs Elizabeth May (alto)	
Subscriptions' Secretary:	Mrs Jennie Lunnon (soprano)	
Members' Secretary:	Mrs Pamela Pye (soprano)	
Patrons' Secretary:	Mrs Sue Gould (soprano)	
Making Music Rep.:	Robin Duys (alto)	
Programme advertising:	Nancy McGiveron (soprano)	
Committee member:	Robin Walker (bass)	

Dennis Johnson has been Chairman of the Society since 2003, and has been a great strength to us all. Dennis leads a busy life at his farm and at Wedmore Church, so he has decided that he must retire from the Chair. Jennie Lunnon has decided that she must retire from the Committee after many years' service. Robin Walker has said that he is willing to be nominated for the Chair, and Dennis has said that he is willing to take over as Subscriptions' Secretary in Jennie's stead.

Jane Mayers wishes to retire from the Committee, and from creating programmes. We need to elect a replacement. Jane will still be a singing member and she has promised to help her replacement with the take over.

Please be an active member and volunteer, or complete a nomination form. Nominations must be received by the Hon Secretary on or before 24 Sept. 2007 (i.e. one week before the AGM, as per the Constitution accepted December 1988).

The Music Sub-committee continues to discuss works for future concerts in order to pass reasonable suggestions on to the main Committee. Please use the form at the back of the Newsletter to make suggestions for the Sub-committee to consider. As always, the orchestra and soloists required have a bearing on the cost of putting on any concert. Please don't let this stop you making suggestions, though - we really need input from all members to be able to do our job properly.

We have had some sad news this year. On 1 July 2007 Marion Barrett died peacefully at home with her family around her. Having had her first treatment for cancer some years ago, she was forced to give up singing completely in 2006 when it returned in a more virulent form. She had planned every detail of her memorial service and Wells Cathedral Voluntary Choir led a most moving service, after which her ashes were interred in the Camery Garden. As well as being Secretary to the Society, Marion was a guide in the Cathedral, and she will be sorely missed by many in the community.

As you can see from the reports on the following pages, it has been a busy and enjoyable season. It only remains for me to thank Matthew Owens and Sam Hudson, our accompanist, for all their hard work over the year. We couldn't do it without them!!

The "Come & Sing" day has also been mentioned elsewhere. Our thanks go to Robin Duys et al for the organisation of the day, to Matthew and Sam for their musical input and to Alison Darragh, Gavin Rogers-Ball, Gerald Burton and Tim Murphy, who came to join us at the end of an enjoyable and hard-working day. As well as providing funds for the Society, the day also raised the profile of the choir and gave some new singers the chance to try singing with a large group. Let's hope we have some new members as a result! Robin and Matthew have agreed to host another day next year - 17 May 2008 - at which we shall work on Mozart's *Requiem*. Further details will be available on the website and from members of the choir, and forms will be given out in January. Do put the date in your diaries now - and encourage your friends and relations to do the same!

The coming season will again be one to look forward to. In December we shall be joined by Sam Hudson and the new organ scholar on piano, a group of senior Choristers, and members of the Cathedral School percussion department for our performance of Britten's *St Nicolas*, and Sarum Orchestra will be back with us for Haydn's *St Nicholas Mass* and Mozart's *Laudate Dominum*. This should make up an interesting and varied programme.

As members already know, in April and May of 2008 we are joining with the Choir and Orchestra of the University of West of England to perform Verdi's *Requiem*: in Bristol Cathedral on 26 April under the baton of Martin Freke, and in Wells Cathedral on 3 May with Matthew Owens conducting. Although it seems quite a time away, we now need to know numbers of singers planning to take part in these concerts. Owing to Bristol Cathedral's schedule, we shall not be able to rehearse there on the day of the concert: we shall therefore go to Bristol Cathedral on the Friday night for rehearsal and on the Saturday night for the concert. It has been suggested that we should investigate hiring a coach for both these evenings, with members who wish to take advantage of this paying towards the hire rather than petrol and parking in Bristol. (If we get enough support for this idea, we should be able to do this for around £5 per head per evening.) We do hope that most members will sign up for the Bristol concert, as well as the Wells one. It will be great fun to be able to sing a work twice (with the same soloists and orchestra) when we have spent so much time and effort working on it. Who knows, we might even get it right the second time!! Please check the dates on page 5, put them in your diaries, and complete the form which should be enclosed with members' newsletters - if you don't have one, please ask!!

I have been asked to say that some members who may have been singing with the Society for many years just try to slip away when they feel the time is right to leave the choir. It would be a great help to know in advance. Please let the Secretary or Chairman know if you - or one of your friends or neighbours! - are planning on retiring. Thank you.

Please also encourage any singers you know to think about joining the choir. Obviously we need men (tenors in particular), but ladies are also welcome!

Finally, I must say a huge "thank you" to Dennis for all the work he has put into his role as Chairman over the last few years. Although he wishes to step down from the Chair, he is still willing to continue working on your behalf on the Committee - for which we are all exceedingly grateful. Dennis has persuaded Robin Walker to stand for election to the Chair, and I'm sure we will give them both the support they deserve in their new roles.

Jane James, Hon. Secretary

From the Conductor

This has been a year of wonderful and varied music-making for the Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society. I thought that the choir gave a marvellous performance of Mendelssohn's mighty oratorio, *Elijah*, and it was good to work once again with the Sarum Orchestra. As I said at the time, *Elijah* was possibly even more of an exhausting sing than Brahms's *German Requiem*, but everyone rose to the challenge magnificently.

The spring brought the delights of the Baroque. I greatly enjoyed this concert: the varied music of Bach (with the wonderful soprano, Susan Hamilton); Purcell and, last but not least, Handel's *Coronation Anthems*. In many ways, I thought this was the best singing that I had heard from the choir – full of energy and drive, right from the word "Zadok", an opening which almost blew me away!

It has also been a good year for recruitment of new members, particularly as a result of the *Come and Sing* day. Here too we had a very enjoyable day singing Haydn's *Nelson Mass*, and thanks go to Robin Duys and his team for all their hard work in making this happen. We must make sure that we continue to spread the word about joining the Society and welcome prospective members most warmly.

Of course, none of the above could be achieved without the hard work of every individual in the choir; without our accompanist, Sam Hudson; or the hard behind-the-scenes work of the committee. I thank you all for a successful year and look forward to working with you in the next exciting season.

Matthew Owens

From the Chairman

Welcome back to existing members and a special welcome to any new members. The coming year promises to be both varied and exciting, culminating in our first double performance - Verdi's *Requiem* at Bristol Cathedral and Wells in collaboration with singers and players from University of West of England.

May I thank all the members of the committee, on your behalf, for their continued support and hard work throughout the year. The duties of Secretary and Treasurer are particularly onerous and if not carried out efficiently would cause immense problems. Thank you, Jane and David, for ensuring the smooth running of the Society.

The "Come and Sing" *Nelson Mass* at St Cuthbert's was not only a thoroughly enjoyable day but made a good profit, due mainly to Robin Duys who volunteered to organise the event and has promised a repeat with another work in May 2008.

Jane Mayers has been producing our concert programme for the last three years and is taking a well earned rest; while Jennie Lunnon, who has been on the committee for more years than I should politely mention, first as Librarian and then Subscription Secretary, is also stepping down. Thank you both and I hope to enjoy your company singing with us for many more years.

Robin Walker has been persuaded to allow himself to be nominated for the position of Chairman - I commend him to you with great confidence in his suitability.

A Memorial Service for the life of Marion Barrett was held in the Cathedral on 27 July. It was a beautiful service planned by Marion with strict instruction that we should not dwell on her long illness. Listening to the tributes to her very active life made me realise how fortunate I had been to have her as a close friend and to share her enthusiasm for the Oratorio Society.

Finally, thank you to Matthew and Sam, who instruct, conduct and accompany us with such expertise, vigour and humour.

Dennis Johnson

From the Treasurer

I am sure you would like to read a short note from me extolling the state of the Society's finances. If I now have your surprised attention I must tell it as it really is! The accounts for the year have not yet been finally closed at the time of writing this so there is still some room for minor changes.

Overall the Society has incurred a deficit over the last year of about £1100 despite the outstanding Gift Aid claim and the profit from the "Come and Sing". Both our major concerts this year realised significant losses: *Elijah* £6450 and *Purcell* £4699. Although our total costs were similar to previous years, the attendance was down on our average. It is clear that it is absolutely vital that we all play our part in persuading people to come to our concerts - we have member-patrons who sell around a dozen tickets, and one who regularly persuades up to twenty people to attend! If only we could all do the same!

The good news is that the "Come and Sing" day has provided the Society with a profit of nearly £600. I would also like to draw attention to the fund-raising events of the year, which have raised a further £350, mainly thanks to the Social Evening after the *Purcell* concert with the sale of your books and records, which made £220. Without these events our losses would have been even greater.

You may have already guessed the content of the next paragraph. Subscriptions have remained static over the last four years and therefore, with the ever-present inflation of costs in general and the fine balance of our profit or loss, a proposal will be presented to the Society at the Annual General Meeting to increase the annual subscription to £60. An increase to the subscription for Patrons is also being implemented, as this also has not increased for many years.

In order to supplement your subscriptions we are launching a Corporate Patrons' Scheme. For a minimum sum of £250 per annum committed over a notional five years, companies can take advantage of the early booking and discounts offered to private Patrons. This will provide an opportunity for corporate entertainment that can be enhanced by other Cathedral facilities. One Wells company has already signed up to this. If you have contacts within the commercial sector of Wells and the surrounding area and think they may be interested, do please let me know and we can discuss an introduction.

I would also like to remind you of the advantages of signing a Gift Aid declaration form. This increases the income from your subscription by 28% at present through the generosity of the Inland Revenue, all at no additional cost to the individual. For me to be able to claim this, I need a form declaring explicitly that you are a tax payer, paying in excess of the individual refund I shall claim. I always carry a few of these forms with me and am only too pleased to distribute them. If you cannot remember if you have signed up already, please ask me, or sign again – duplication of declarations doesn't mean I can claim twice!

More details will be provided at the AGM and I shall be happy (?) to answer any of your questions at that time.

David Cooke

DATES FOR SEASON 2007 - 2008

We are continuing with the rehearsal times as last year, i.e. Monday nights starting at 7.30pm and finishing at 9.30pm. The north-west door is opened at 7.00pm and locked again at 7.40pm. If you know you will have to arrive after this time on a particular day, it is helpful if you can let Jane James know in advance; otherwise, if you do get held up unavoidably, then please make sure you "rattle" the latch loudly - we shall probably then hear you!

8 DECEMBER 2007

BRITTEN - ST NICOLAS HAYDN - SAINT NICHOLAS MASS MOZART - LAUDATE DOMINUM

Monday 10 September	Beginning of term
Monday 1 October	AGM 7.00pm sharp, followed by rehearsal
Monday 22 October	Half term - no rehearsal
Monday 29 October	Half term - no rehearsal
Friday 7 December	Rehearsal - normal times
Saturday 8 December	Rehearsal 1.00pm - 4.00pm
	Concert 7.00pm
Monday 10 December	Social get-together - venue to be confirmed

26 APRIL 2008

VERDI - *REQUIEM* - BRISTOL CATHEDRAL - WELLS CATHEDRAL

3 MAY 2008

Monday 7 January	Beginning of term
Monday 11 February	Half term - no rehearsal
Monday 17 March	Last rehearsal of term
Monday 14 April	Normal rehearsal
Monday 21 April	Joint rehearsal in Wells
Friday 25 April	Final rehearsal for all singers performing in Bristol
Saturday 26 April	Concert - Bristol Cathedral
Monday 28 April	Joint rehearsal in Wells
Friday 2 May	Final rehearsal for all singers performing in Wells
Saturday 3 May	Rehearsal 1.00pm - 4.00pm
	Concert in Wells 7.00pm

COME AND SING - MOZART'S *REQUIEM* - SATURDAY 17 MAY 2008

The "Come and Sing" day held in St Cuthbert's Church on 9 June 2007 was a great success - so much so that Matthew Owens has kindly agreed to hold another one next year, on 17 May 2008. Once again we ask you to put this date in your diaries now, and encourage your friends and relations to do the same. For a day of this sort to be successful we need a good turnout, as we had this year, so please advertise it widely by word of mouth.

Last year there was a feeling that we were being asked to commit to this day too early in the year. Robin will therefore start giving out forms at the beginning of the January term this time. Please, though, make sure you keep the date free!

BOOKING DATES 2007 - 2008

Saturday 8 December 2007 at 7.00pm

**BRITTEN - ST NICOLAS
HAYDN - ST NICHOLAS MASS
MOZART - LAUDATE DOMINUM**

Sarum Orchestra,
Percussionists & Pianists from Wells Cathedral School
Wells Cathedral Choristers
Soprano: Rebecca Outram
Alto: Penelope Davies
Tenor: Andrew Carwood
Bass: Jonathan Davies

Booking Dates:

Patrons' Direct Priority must be received by 31 October 2007 (via Hon. Sec.)
Booking in order to qualify for 10% discount

General booking opens from Saturday 3 November 2007 (Cathedral Shop/
TIC, Wells)

Saturday 3 May 2008 at 7.00pm

VERDI - REQUIEM

Orchestra & Chorus of University of West of England
Soprano: Claire Weston
Alto: Jane Irwin
Tenor: Jeffrey Lloyd-Roberts
Bass: Roland Wood

Booking Dates:

Patrons' Direct Priority must be received by 26 March 2008 (via Hon. Sec.)
Booking in order to qualify for 10% discount

General booking opens from Saturday 29 March 2008 (Cathedral Shop/
TIC, Wells)

USEFUL ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR BOOKING

Hon Secretary: Mrs Jane James
13 Penn Close, Wells BA5 3JQ
Tel. 01749 674800
email: janejames.wcos@yahoo.co.uk

Cathedral Shop Booking Office: West Cloister, Wells BA5 2PA
Tel. 01749 672773
(if booking by Credit card, please add £1)
(cheques should be made payable to
"Wells Cathedral Publications Ltd.")

Tourist Information Centre: Open 10.00am - 4.00pm daily
Market Place, Wells BA5 2RB
Tel. 01749 672552

For all postal bookings please include SAE and daytime telephone number

Dear Patrons,

You will all by now have received a reminder letter for the Patrons' Subscription, due at the beginning of the 2007/2008 season, informing you of the increase to a minimum sum of £15.00. This is the first increase for many years, and we hope that you will still feel able to support us. It is imperative that the Society raises more money in order to continue to put on an interesting and varied programme.

We shall still run the same Patrons' Direct Priority Booking Scheme, with 10% discount on all tickets ordered directly from the Society. The forms for this can be found on the opposite page, and should be sent to Jane James by the dates shown.

As always, our thanks go to all the Patrons who have supported us for many years, and to all the new Patrons who hopefully will continue to do so. Please remember that, if you can introduce two new Patrons to the Society, you are entitled to a complimentary ticket for the next concert.

I hope you all enjoy what should be a most exciting season.

Sue Gould, Patrons' Secretary

PATRONS' DIRECT PRIORITY BOOKING SCHEME UNDER THE NEW CATHEDRAL SEATING AND TICKETING ARRANGEMENTS

The new colour-block system for ticket sales in the Cathedral has now been in operation for over six months, and it does not seem to have made as much difference to our seating arrangements as we at first feared. Tickets for Oratorio Society concerts are now priced and coloured according to the blocks required by the Cathedral Administration, but we are allowed to use reserved seating within the main body of the Nave, and we shall continue to do so. Side aisle seats will still be unreserved within two colour blocks (brown for the front half and white for the rear half on both sides).

Direct Priority Booking for Patrons seems to be working well under the new system, continuing to give our Patrons the best chance of acquiring tickets for their preferred seats, as well as letting them take advantage of a 10% discount on the price of any tickets they may buy by this system. (There is no limit as to the number of tickets a Patron may order through this scheme.)

Patrons only therefore may use the Direct Priority Booking Scheme using the forms opposite. Orders should be given or sent directly to the Hon. Secretary of the Society, Mrs Jane James, and **MUST** be received by the stated closing date. We do have to be strict about this, as the rest of the tickets have to be handed to the Box Office immediately after this date. Orders received will be dealt with strictly in order of receipt, though tickets will not be issued until after the closing date. Those Patrons who prefer to book tickets for both concerts at once will have their order held carefully until booking opens for the spring concert.

If Patrons have any preference for where they sit in the Cathedral, they may make a note of this on their booking form. We shall do our best to take their request into account when sorting tickets, though it is obviously not always possible to please everyone! From that point of view, the sooner you book the more chance you have of getting the tickets you prefer.

We hope that Patrons will find our concerts tempting this year - it is a varied programme which we are very much looking forward to, as we hope you are.

WCOS PATRONS' DIRECT PRIORITY BOOKING APPLICATION

From: Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode: Tel:

I confirm that I am a Patron of WCOS and that I wish to order tickets for the "Saint Nicolas" Concert on Saturday **8 December 2007** as follows:

- Gold £18 tickets (Row A - H) @ £16.20 = £
- Green £16 tickets (Row J - crossing) @ £14.40 = £
- Red £14 tickets (Row U - CC) @ £12.60 = £
- Blue £12 tickets (Row DD - KK) @ £10.80 = £

I enclose a cheque made payable to "WCOS" in the total amount of: £

Please return together with cheque (and S.A.E. if you wish tickets to be posted out) to Jane James, 13 Penn Close, Wells BA5 3JQ (01749 674800) by 31 October 2007.

WCOS PATRONS' DIRECT PRIORITY BOOKING APPLICATION

From: Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode: Tel:

I confirm that I am a Patron of WCOS and that I wish to order tickets for the Verdi "Requiem" in Wells Cathedral on **3 May 2008** as follows:

- Gold £18 tickets (Row A - H) @ £16.20 = £
- Green £16 tickets (Row J - crossing) @ £14.40 = £
- Red £14 tickets (Row U - CC) @ £12.60 = £
- Blue £12 tickets (Row DD - KK) @ £10.80 = £

I enclose a cheque made payable to "WCOS" in the total amount of: £

Please return together with cheque (and S.A.E. if you wish tickets to be posted out) to Jane James, 13 Penn Close, Wells BA5 3JQ (01749 674800) by 26 March 2008.

N.B. Tickets may be ordered for both concerts at the same time. Any advance bookings received for Verdi's "Requiem" will be held over until booking opens in March 2008.

WELLS CATHEDRAL ORATORIO SOCIETY

Nomination for Chairman of the Committee:

Proposer:

Secunder:

Signature of nominee: Date:



Nomination for the Committee:

Proposer:

Secunder:

Signature of nominee: Date:

*Please hand to the Hon. Secretary, Jane James,
on or before 24 September 2007*



SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONCERT PROGRAMMES

Composer/s:

Name of work/s:

.....

Suggested by: Voice:

*Please hand this form to the Chairman
or the Hon. Secretary. Thank you.*

Date: