

Music making in Alton



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Mission Statement

The orchestra exists to serve the local community and to provide a forum for all musicians who enjoy playing in an ensemble. We have a policy of welcoming anyone without the requirement of an audition and we maintain no restrictions on section size within the orchestra. The music we typically play will require someone of at least grade 3 standard but exams are not expected. The age range of players encompasses year 9 school musicians to retired members. We offer the opportunity for school players to stretch their playing ability.

Our music repertoire is wide and varied to suit all tastes and ranges from classical symphonies to show music incorporating big band and swing. The string section plays together and we are developing the wind section into a separate ensemble. Whatever your musical taste it should be well provided for.

The orchestra is run by a chairman and committee and the involvement of members in organisation is encouraged and welcomed. We have social evenings from time to time and produce concerts 3 to 4 times a year. Members pay a termly fee to cover music cost etc. We pride ourselves on our friendly, hardworking approach to our music making.

We are fortunate in enjoying a close community relationship with Eggar's School and are very appreciative of their support with rehearsal accommodation.

Come and see for yourself.

Diary

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------|------------------------|
| Last Rehearsal before Easter Break | 7.15 | 26 th March |
| Spring Concert at Treloar School | 7.30 | 2 nd April |
| First Rehearsal after Easter Break | 7.15 | 30 th April |
| No Rehearsal, Half Term | | 28 th May |

How do you get an oboe player to play A flat?

Take the batteries out of his tuner

What is the definition of perfect pitch?

When you lob an oboist into a dumpster without hitting the rim

How does a trombonist interpret 'detaché'?

Without Slide



Chairman's Report

Looking back over the past year and a half, it is apparent how much the ACO has increased both in numbers and in playing strength. Thanks to our 'Open Evenings' and increased publicity we have gained 20 very competent new members across all sections of the orchestra, whilst retaining most of our regulars from the past. As well as looking and sounding very impressive on the concert platform, this means that rehearsals now are much better attended, and this encourages the conductor and orchestra alike to make faster progress. Many thanks to all our new members – you are most welcome, and your contribution is well recognised.

With this higher profile and increased confidence, your committee is planning hard to put on one concert in each school term. Last year's Christmas Concert was a notable first, accompanying the Alton Choral Society, and may be repeated this December, so long as the proposed Bill affecting licensing of music does not get in the way!

We shall return to play in Treloars School in April, and we would very much like to put on a concert of our own at Eggar's School in the summer term as our contribution to the Community Partnership arrangement they have with us.

Several players from the ACO formed the pit orchestra for Alton Operatic and Dramatic Society's production of 'La Vie Parisienne' earlier this month, and looking further ahead we are contemplating the possibility of an ACO Concert Tour to Normandy, but this will obviously entail agreeing dates suitable to our players well in advance.

None of this could have been achieved without an enthusiastic and hard-working Conductor and Committee, and I would like to record my thanks to them all.

Chris Leggett

Conductor's Spot

Following our Christmas Concert I look forward to a new year of exciting music making. The Orchestra continues to grow both in members and experience and I have been encouraged by the standard achieved both collectively and by individuals. We have commenced detailed rehearsal of a number of new

pieces and will present them at our concert at Treloars School in April. I hope that the collaboration with the Alton Choral Society will be a feature of this year and look forward to much rewarding music making.

Graham Cross



Concert Report

A highly charged atmosphere of excitement and anticipation greeted the Alton Concert Orchestra, conducted by Graham Cross at their second Christmas Festival of Music at the Church of The Good Shepherd in Four Marks on Saturday 14th December (as illustrated on front cover). Joined this year by the Alton Choral Society augmented by members of the Alton Operatic Society and conducted by Richard Toll, there was something for everyone in the varied and cheerful Christmas music presented to an enthusiastic audience who packed the church.

The evening was introduced by the Reverend Howard Wright, vicar at Four Marks who later described the work in Karamoja, Uganda which would benefit from the proceeds of the concert collection. Both Conductors introduced their items in a friendly and relaxed way; the Choir featuring a number of John Rutter carol settings, 'The Star Carol', 'Mary's Lullaby', 'I Saw Three Ships' and 'The Shepherd's Pipe Carol' with the accompaniment of the orchestra who performed solo items including a 'Rhapsody on Christmas Carols', Vaughan Williams Fantasia on 'Greensleeves' and a superb setting of the Adolph Adam canticle 'O Holy Night'.

The audience participated in a number

of well known carols and, after hearing the Leroy Anderson 'Christmas Festival' at the commencement of the programme, joined in with Choir and Orchestra to produce a rousing finale to this exhilarating evening.

The music was interspersed with dramatic and thoughtful readings presented by Tim Golding and Christine Chappelle of the Alton Fringe Theatre Group. The retiring collection amounted to a magnificent £700 for the charity, Karamoja.

It was splendid to witness the coming together of so much local talent and these societies would like to hear from anyone interested in joining them. Information on joining Alton Concert Orchestra is on page 7, if you are interested in joining Alton Choral Society then contact Richard Toll on (01420) 563962.

Alton Herald



New Player – Helen Dyer

I began making music at the age of 5 with piano lessons, but when I was 9 we were given a cello recital at school and I knew that was the instrument for me. I went home that day and simply told my parents I was going to learn! Fortunately I could borrow a school cello initially and my parents were very supportive.

Music has always been an important part of my life. I studied music at school and sixth form, and just about all extra-curricular activities for me were musical. I worked my way up gradually from string training orchestra to Surrey County Youth Orchestra, and sang in various choirs as well.

Formal music learning stopped when I went to university to study modern

languages. I played with an orchestra for a year, but the 30-minute walk each way with heavy cello finally proved too much! I also spent a year in France for my studies and had to leave my cello at home. I therefore had several years without belonging to any musical group.

When I started working I was determined to bring music-making back into my life on a regular basis – so I was delighted when Tamsin (bassoon) suggested I join the Alton Concert Orchestra. I had to wait several months until I could afford a car of my own, but I finally joined the orchestra in 2001 and haven't looked back!

Helen Dyer

Player Profile – Chris Leggett

Chris Leggett joined the Orchestra in January 1999. He started playing the oboe in his 30's and got to Grade 5 with his tutor. At this time he also enjoyed playing music with friends. However, whilst his family were young, his skills on the oboe somewhat lapsed, until Chris wanted to get back to playing again and joined ACO.

Chris plays the first oboe part (and, as he points out, this isn't difficult as he is the only oboist currently playing with us). He also plays the cor anglais, but not usually at the same time, although some pieces of music would seem to ask for this!

In addition, Chris has learnt the piano, sings and has conducted a small choir.

On the business front, Chris left Zeneca as an IT manager and now he works part time as a non-executive director in the NHS.

Chris has been the Chairman of ACO since September 2001. He has recently organised the very successful beer and skittles evening.

An unusual fact attributed to Chris is that he once played cricket against Australia's Glen McGrath. He doesn't say who won or lost, but perhaps the Aussies could do with some help now Shane Warne has been sent home!

Sarah Main



Beer and Skittles

Twenty-two members of the orchestra (including some brave partners!) met at The French Horn, Alton, on Friday 7th February for a beer and skittles evening. Organised by Chris Leggett (oboe) the players were split into three teams (strings, winds and brass). Chris showed his artistic flair by giving each player a label with a historic instrument drawn onto it!

The brass section was under-represented with *bona fide* players and so all partners were automatically made honorary brass players for the evening! What they lacked in musical ability they made up for in bowling, winning the final round of the first game.

Equally amusing – probably the most unmusical member of the gathered crowd accumulated the highest score. Tom Main won the bottle of wine ... at least this might improve the singing in the shower!

A convenient break was called when the bar meals were served and the bowlers nipped out for a round of liquid refreshment.

The more traditional bowling was followed by a round of ‘Killer’ which soon divided those who were the true pro’s and those that just dabbled in the sport! After a closely fought final round between Chris Collins (violin) and Martin Patey (trumpet), Chris triumphed at the end to win a box of chocolates!

The evening was a great success and well worth the £7 a head. I’m sure this is a social event that we will wish to repeat.

Sarah Main



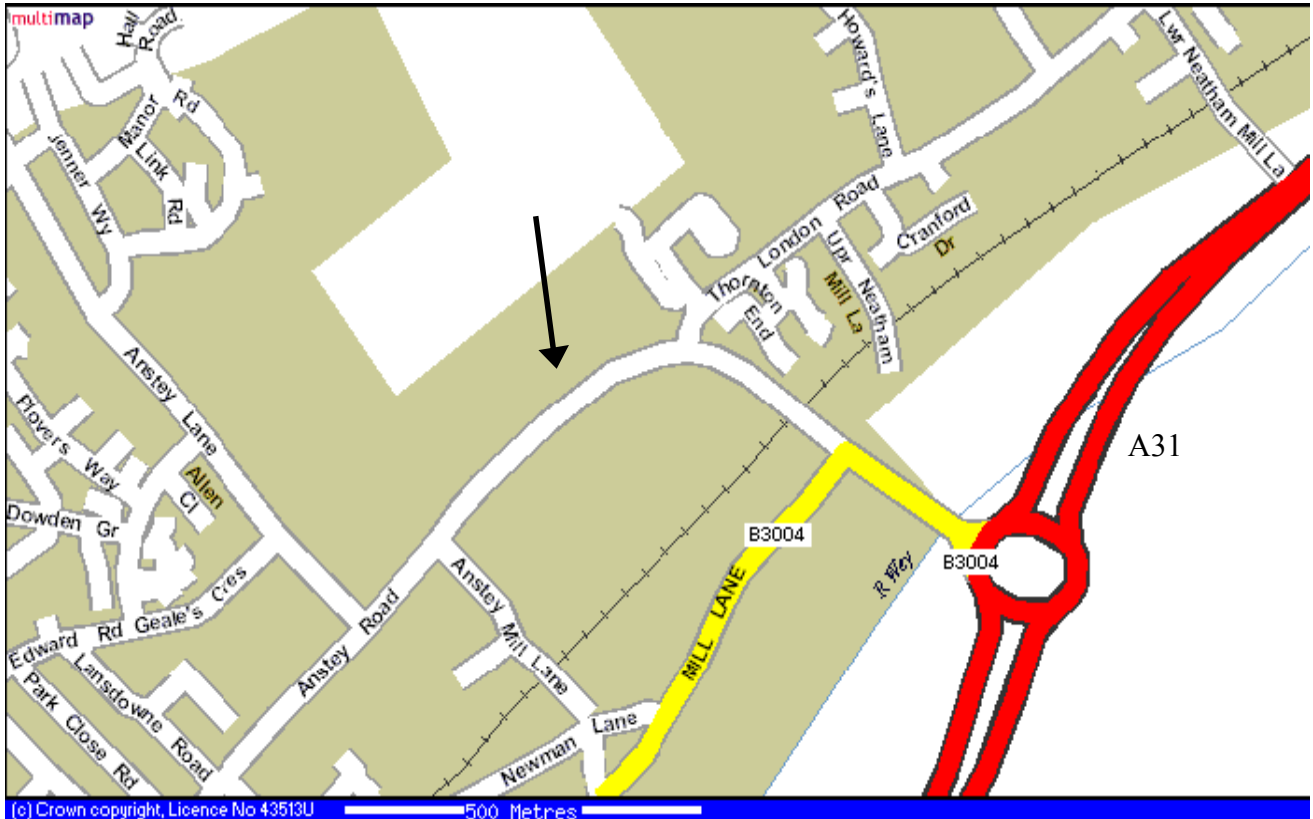
How many French horn players does it take to change a light bulb?

Just one, but he'll spend two hours checking the bulb for alignment and leaks



Thinking of Joining Us?

We meet at Eggar's School every Wednesday
(except in school holidays)
from 7.15 to 9.00



The cost of joining is, £5 for students and £10 for adults. We always welcome new players to the orchestra - there is no audition required to join and we do not insist on you attending every rehearsal. See our mission statement on page 2.

If you are thinking of joining then please contact one of the following:

| Name | Telephone Number | Position |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Graham Cross | (01420) 562234 | Conductor |
| Chris Leggett | (01730) 893032 | Chairman |
| Mac Newton | (01962) 773130 | Secretary |

Or visit our website: www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

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Alton Concert Orchestra



With Treloar School Choir

Spring Concert

Newton Davis Hall
Upper Froyle, Treloar School

Wednesday 2nd April
Concert starts at 7.30pm

Free Admission

Collection in aid of
Treloar School

**For more information visit our website:
www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk**

or contact the conductor (Graham Cross) on (01420) 562234