

Music making in Alton



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Chairman's Report

This has been another very successful year for the orchestra. We now have the largest number of players ever, with 35 regulars on the books, plus others we can call upon for concerts. We are continuing to attract new players in all sections of the orchestra and we are now able to tackle works we could not have approached 3-4 years ago. We regularly have 24 plus people at each rehearsal, and I am very pleased to note that we look a much younger group (on average!) too. With David Budd taking on some of the conducting we now appear to have a sustainable future, and I think we should all be proud of the part each of us has played in getting here.



I believe the success has been due to several factors:

- Our conductor, Graham, who inspires us all, and has lots of good musical contacts.
- A hard-working committee, who keep pushing out good ideas and good publicity – my thanks to them all, especially Sarah Main, our 'CODA' editor.
- Also, significantly, our move back into the heart of Alton. We are indebted to Tim Griffiths and Amery Hill School for inviting us to join in partnership with them, and to rehearse in these excellent surroundings. We are very pleased that the school has successfully gained Music College status – the only one in Hampshire and only one of five in the country - and we look forward to furthering our partnership in the future.

Michaelmas Concert

St Lawrence Church, Alton
Saturday 2nd October, 7.30 pm

Admission free; retiring collection

As part of:

Listen Up!
Festival of Orchestras 2004

BBC RADIO 3 with the Association of British Orchestras and Making Music



David Budd



Chairman's Report

We put on two concerts in the last year – what I hope will be a regular joint one with Alton Choral Society in Four Marks at Christmas, which raised £1200 for charity, and a Spring Concert of our own in Amery Hill School. Sections of the orchestra are also coming together to rehearse and perform spontaneously – clarinets, flutes and cellos – and this is another healthy sign.

Apart from the concert dates noted elsewhere in CODA, we will be hosting a 'Play-in' in conjunction with Amery Hill School sometime next year. The aim is to draw in players young and old from the community under the guidance of a professional musician, and to rehearse and perform some music new to us, while picking up 'master class' style tips.

A couple of years ago, we instituted an award for an outstanding contribution to the life of the orchestra. I'm sure you will all agree that the recipient this year is the very obvious and popular choice of David Budd who has taken on the role of Assistant Conductor thereby letting Graham have a play in the back row.

On the social front, we had a convivial Skittle Evening in February, and a trip to see the Welsh National Opera perform Carmen in June. I'm sure that both events can bear repetition.

Chris Leggett

The Committee elected for the coming year were:

Conductor	Graham Cross	
Assistant Conductor	David Budd	
Chairman	Chris Leggett	Oboe
Secretary	Mac Newton	Leader
Treasurer	Rachel Pritchard	'Cello
Membership Secretary	Helen Harvey	'Cello
Minute Secretaries	Chris Collins	Violin
	Isabel Tucker	Violin
Publicity / Archives	Lindy Wiltshire	Violin
	Chris Collins	Violin
Concert Secretary	Barbara Dawkins	Violin
CODA Editor	Sarah Main	Flute
Webmaster	Daniel McGowan	Trombone
Webmaster Assistant	David Budd	Trumpet

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

Only one but he will spend an hour trying to figure out what position it needs to be in.



Spring Concert Report

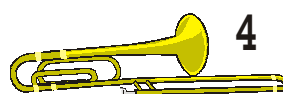
Back in March, Alton Concert Orchestra put on a varied programme that featured all sections of the orchestra taking a leading role in their turn. Our new rehearsal and performing venue in Alton – Amery Hill School – was packed out and the usual supporters’ club of friends and relatives was swelled by many others who had been attracted in by the return of the orchestra to the heart of Alton. The conducting was shared between Graham Cross and our new Associate Conductor, David Budd who is now a regular figure on the rostrum and is enjoying learning new skills with the baton.

The concert began with Sullivan’s “Yeomen of the Guard” Overture. Many of the orchestra had been sneakily practising this item hard earlier in the month when they formed the pit orchestra for the AODS production of the same opera, so it was played with great skill and gusto. Three trumpeters then had the opportunity to show off in Leroy Anderson’s showpiece “Buglers’ Holiday” before the band calmed down with a selection from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical “The King and I”.

After a long gestation period in rehearsal, we finally brought Gerswin’s “American in Paris” into the public domain, and the orchestra managed to navigate the overlapping themes of strolling pedestrians, hectic traffic and crowded bars, to end up all together at a rendezvous in a night club, somewhere in Monmartre I would suspect.

After the interval David Budd raced us neatly through a couple of numbers from Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker Suite” before Jonathan Hodgetts delighted the audience with virtuoso playing of his solo instrument in “Tapestry for Tuba”, accompanied seemingly at random by the orchestra. The string section then performed Greig’s “Holberg Suite”, not without the odd problem due to lack of violas in one of the movements (anyone out there play one?), but overall produced a commendable sound. The resident clarinet quartet, including Graham Cross, serenaded us and we ended the concert with another overture (I think that should read ‘fermeture’ – Ed.) – Mozart’s “Magic Flute”, which was played accurately and dramatically. Anyway, I like it! And we collected enough money from a generous audience to buy more music.

Chris Leggett



Beer and Skittles

Another successful Beer and Skittles evening was held on 27th February at The French Horn, Alton.

Around thirty members and partners were split into three teams: Brass, Strings and Wind. The bowlers joined in enthusiastically battling it out between the various sections of the orchestra. Supper was then served in the form of a variety of bar meals.



Once again, the non-members seemed to fare better than the musicians and Tom Main won the bottle of wine for the second year running. (He will play blindfolded if invited next year!)

The String section also played particularly well, particularly in the “Killer” round. After a hard fought battle, Mac Newton (violin) won the bottle of wine in this round.

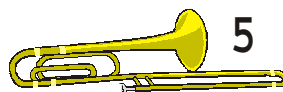
Many thanks to Chris Leggett for organising another successful social event – we look forward to it next year!

Sarah Main



Diary

Rehearsal in Church	4.00	2 nd October
Michaelmas Concert	7.30	2 nd October
Open Evening	7.30	6 th October
No Rehearsal, Half Term	-	27 th October
Last Rehearsal before Christmas Break	7.30	8 th December
Rehearsal in Church	pm	11 th December
Christmas Concert	7.30	11 th December
First Rehearsal after Christmas Break	7.30	5 th January
No Rehearsal, Half Term	-	16 th February



Player Profile – Jonathon Hodgetts

I was born in Winchester Hospital in 1959 – at the time famous as the largest baby ever born there, weighing 12lb 4oz! I grew up in Andover and the surrounding villages of Amport and Grateley. My first musical activity was at the age of 8, when to my mother's complete surprise, I volunteered to sing in the church choir.

On going to the Winton School, Andover I soon realised that there were special benefits in being in the school band, such as not having to sing in school musicals and using the music room as a refuge to avoid un-liked lessons. I therefore decided to learn to play a brass instrument. My initial choice was the trumpet, but on going for my first lesson, the peripatetic teacher, Colin Burr said my teeth were not right for a small mouthpiece, so I started on the Euphonium. After a few weeks I spotted a large B \flat Tuba in the cupboard and asked if I could try that, thinking the bigger the better! I soon advanced through the grades and played solos of 'The Elephant' and 'Forty Fathoms' in school concerts.

On leaving school, I thought the Tuba had served its purpose and it was stuffed in the attic and forgotten for a couple of years while I spent my spare time on model railways and travelling to Germany to photograph the last steam trains. Then a local brass band, Test Valley Brass asked if I could help them out playing in a concert on bass (which the tuba is known as in bands). I did, and have since never stopped playing. For 14 years I just went along once a week to band rehearsal and never really practiced otherwise – playing bass in a local brass band is not very technically demanding and the music for the instrument not very exciting to play alone.

All that changed in 1992 when through a date with a girl who was into classical music I went to a PROMS concert at the Royal Albert Hall. By chance, we sat in the choir right behind the Tuba player in the orchestra who played Tchaikovsky's Polish Symphony. I had never thought of playing Tuba in an orchestra and was absolutely inspired.

I started to regularly go to orchestral concerts, soon bought an Orchestral E \flat tuba, started practising hard again, and even took further lessons to raise myself from being a brass band bass player into an orchestral tubist which is a much more demanding role. A good 4 octaves range is required, a big mellow sound and plenty of confidence as there is nowhere to hide.

Through a friend in the City of Winchester Brass, I heard about the Alton Concert Orchestra and soon joined. However, remembering the Tchaikovsky inspiration, I still aspired to join a large symphony orchestra to play those major works. In November 2000 my dream at last came true when I joined the Salisbury Orchestral Society playing Mahler's Resurrection Symphony in Salisbury Cathedral. Today I play in the Salisbury Symphony Orchestra (by which the Orchestral Society is now known), the Hampshire Ex-Serviceman's Concert Band (a military band), the Surrey Mahler Orchestra and frequently the Rehearsal Orchestra (where I played Wagner's Rheingold last year). I have not forgotten my band roots and often play with the East Woodhay Silver Band (near Newbury). I also of course still play with the ACO for some light relief and because they are such a nice friendly bunch!

Of course I travel a lot to rehearsals and engagements which range from concerts in Croydon to country shows in Somerset, from garden parties in Oxfordshire to playing out cruise liners at Southampton docks. In total I drive almost 20,000 miles a year in the course of my tuba playing, but luckily I also enjoy driving in my cherished Mercedes.

My work is also in music. In 1981 I joined the Performing Right Society which represents composers and publishers of music and is located in central London. I am now the Information Security Manager for the combined Alliance of the PRS and MCPS (which represents record companies).

Little did I think when I was at school that music would come to dominate my life!

Jonathon Hodgetts



Thinking of Joining Us?

Then come to our Open Evening on Wednesday 6th October

This is our fourth Open Evening and will be held during our rehearsal night on Wednesday 6th October in the main hall of Amery Hill School starting at 7.30. This will give musicians interested in playing orchestral music locally an opportunity to come along with their instrument and meet the Conductor, Graham Cross, and members of the orchestra.

**We meet at Amery Hill School every Wednesday
(except in school holidays)
from 7.30 to 9.30 pm**

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. 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

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.

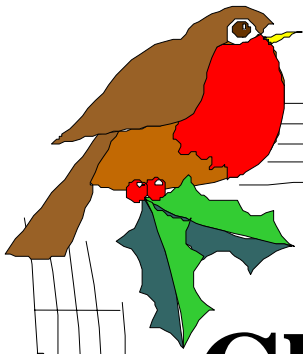
The Orchestra is run by a chairman and committee and the involvement of members in organisation is encouraged and welcomed. We have social evenings from time to time and produce concerts 3 to 4 times a year. Members pay a termly fee to cover music cost etc. We pride ourselves on our friendly, hardworking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

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

Come and see for yourself.

We welcome opportunities to perform locally in aid of community causes.





Festival of Christmas Music

With

**Alton Concert Orchestra,
Alton Choral Society**

And

Yourselves

Admission free; retiring collection

For more information visit our website

www.altonconcertorchestra.org.uk

Or contact Graham Cross (01420) 562234

The Festival is at the
**Church of the Good Shepherd
in Four Marks**

It starts at **7.30 pm**
on **Saturday 11th December**

