

Music making in Alton



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Chairman's Annual Report

(to 31st August 2005)

Preparations had been made for the orchestra to apply for Charitable status during the latter half of 2004, and following a proposal at the Committee Meeting of 9 November, a Special General Meeting was held on 8 December which adopted the proposed Model Constitution and appointed the current Committee members as the first Trustees. Formal application was received by the Charities Commission on 20 December and Charitable Status was granted on 18 January 2005.



The membership of the Orchestra has risen to a record 49 players, with 30 people or more regularly attending each rehearsal. 10 new players have joined in the last year, 6 as a result of the well-advertised 'Open Evening' held in October. As a result, the standard of playing has improved, particularly in the string section, and the time taken to get new pieces up to performance standard has decreased markedly. During the past year string, cello, flute and clarinet ensembles have rehearsed and performed music separately from the full orchestra, and we have performed a piece with a piano soloist. Our library of music has been catalogued, and will be shared with other musical groups in the area on a reciprocal basis.



Because the financial year of the ACO runs to the 31 August, it was decided to change the date of the AGM to the Autumn, rather than in July, so that the most recent accounts could be finalised, audited and presented at the AGM. These accounts will now form part of this Annual Report. Actions have been put in place to comply with other charitable status requirements, including the repayment of any tax from members' donations. No payments were made to any of the Trustees, except for the reimbursement of legitimate payments incurred by them on behalf of the Orchestra.

We gave a concert in St Lawrence Church, Alton on 1 October, raising £200 for church funds. The concert was given as part of a two-week 'Listen Up!' Festival of Orchestras, sponsored by BBC Radio 3 in conjunction with the Association of British Orchestra (professionals) and Making Music (amateurs)



Q. What do you do when a musician comes to your front door?
A. You give him the money and take the pizza.



Chairman's Annual Report (Continued)

The annual Christmas Concert was held in The Church of the Good Shepherd, Four Marks, in conjunction with the Alton Choral Society on 11 December. The high point was a performance of Liszt's 'Les Preludes', and over £800 was raised for the work of the church overseas.

On 7 January 2005, the Orchestra took part in a concert given in Andover by two young people, one of whom was a former member of the orchestra, and raised £210 towards the cost their travel to undertake charity work in India. We performed a concert on 15 June at Treloar School, Upper Froyle in conjunction with their choir which raised £200 for their Music Department. We held a successful Quiz Evening for orchestra members and friends on 17 June.

We have been admitted as Full Members of 'Making Music', the umbrella organisation for amateur musicians. This will give us property and public liability insurance; access to other music libraries and catalogues; support and development in meeting the needs of our local community; access to grant money for special projects; the opportunity to take part in musical workshops and training events; and the possibility of engaging solo artists for concerts at very favourable rates.

As we have playing members under the age of 18, in order to conform with current legislation and as a condition of our letting at Amery Hill we require a person present at rehearsals and concerts to have a valid certificate from the Criminal Records Bureau in this respect. At present, 4 members of the Trustees and a further 10 members of the Orchestra have such certification.

Howlers in Musical Education

Accumulated by music teachers in Missouri

- ❖ Refrain means don't do it. A refrain in music is the part you better not try to sing.
- ❖ A tuba is much larger than its name.

Two editions of the orchestra's magazine, CODA, have been published and have been made widely available in Alton as well as distributed to members of the orchestra. It has been useful in raising awareness of the orchestra and in recruiting new members.

The recipient of the annual award for a major contribution to the Orchestra is Jean Piper, for cataloguing our music library.

As part of our Partnership with Amery Hill School, recently awarded Music College status, we gratefully acknowledge the rehearsal facilities the school provides for us.

Finally, I should like to express my thanks to the Trustees of Alton Concert Orchestra for their hard work in contributing to all the changes and improvements that have taken place this year, and to all the members of the Orchestra for their dedication to playing and enjoying music. We can all look forward to consolidation the benefits of our new status and membership, and further developing the activities of the Orchestra.

Chris Leggett

LIST OF TRUSTEES

Christopher Leggett	Chairman
Barbara Dawkins	Secretary
Rachel Pritchard	Treasurer
Graham Cross	Principal Conductor
David Budd	Associate Conductor
Mac Newton	Leader
Helen Harvey	Membership Secretary
Sarah Main	'CODA' Editor
Daniel McGowan	Webmaster
Lindy Wiltshire	Publicity/Archives
Chris Collins	Publicity

- ❖ Handel was half German, half Italian, and half English. He was rather large.
- ❖ Just about any animal skin can be stretched over a frame to make a pleasant sound once the animal is removed.



Player Profile

Mac Newton

Perhaps it was my Mother's Scottish blood (she being of Clan Allison) who could not bear the thought of her Father's violin being left unused when he passed on. Whatever – she talked me into starting violin lessons in my eighth year. There were some half dozen of us all together each week in the staffroom. It was so cramped that I stuck the end of my bow into long-suffering Mr Webb's left ear. No doubt he was relieved when I left to take up a scholarship as a Quirister in Winchester College (a chorister in any other language). There the good Mr Wells could offer me more space and pretty soon I was playing in the College Orchestra.

Three years later and I could sing music pretty much on sight, had played my violin in public in the Tower of London (they let me out again), and was an aspiring musician when... my voice broke!

At Portsmouth Grammar, David (Taffy) Williams took Grandad's violin and me on. Perhaps I have Welsh blood in me too, for I have certainly sung most of my life, and Taffy and I got on famously. He introduced me to life in the pit and also helped me to a distinction at Grade VIII before I left to go to University to study – no, not music, but engineering at Imperial College.

However, all was not lost. There I met some Liverpudlians who persuaded me along to the folk club. Now I also have Irish blood in my veins, so jigs and reels came naturally. Folk music however was not enough. I also played with the orchestra, sang with the choir, (where I met my future wife) and performed with the Operatic Society (where I met my future wife again)! Despite this, I managed to get a degree and went off to design railway bridges, then North Sea oil rigs and now computer software.

But in the evenings I was usually to be found either on stage with my wife or playing in pit-bands for other groups. That is, except when I worked in Sweden and Norway (we sang in choirs there). From Norway, we moved to the Alton area. I headed off to find an orchestra while Barbara headed for the Operatic Society. That was eight years ago.

ACO was then much smaller and less proficient than it is now, but has grown in stature under Graham's guidance. I became its leader about six years ago.

Of course, one thing leads to another, so now I play for some Operatic Society shows, have conducted some, play with Four Marks Folk Band, in churches in Alresford and Winchester. In fact, time, or rather the lack of it, is the only limiting factor.

I have had several partners over the years. Grandad's old fiddle was also an old wag (he swore blind he was a Stradivarius) but my current love is more honest. She is *slightly* older than I, having been born in Northern France in 1883.

Mac Newton



Quiz Night Review

In June, members of the orchestra swapped their instruments for thinking caps for the first ever ACO Quiz Night. Cellist Helen Dyer posed entertaining questions covering everything from the date of decimalization to the name of the largest organ in the body. Teams of players and friends ranged from the single-section Crazy Clarinets to the pessimistically titled Hopeless. Graham Cross deftly helped conduct proceedings. He held a pencil instead of a baton for the night, and kept score as ten rounds - including sport, natural history and, inevitably, music, whizzed by.

Score 'multiplier' cards were employed with varying degrees of success as each team attempted to gain the advantage, and the competition soon hotted up. Envious prizes of miniature musical boxes that played 'We Are The Champions' were eventually won by the cryptically named HH. But, as they say, it's the taking part that counts - and, with a tasty fish supper into the bargain, a good time was had by all.

Tamsin Seymour



The World According to Graham

Our Conductor, Graham Cross, has often used interesting turns of phrase to get his meaning across during rehearsal.

The following are the sayings of Graham as witnessed by the cello section!

- A surge of wind.
- A man playing a rubber trumpet looking for an elastic band.
- Make it rude.
- She looked like she'd got two girl guides down her dress.
- I like the word "pathook".
- Are we repeating?
- I want you to stroke all your parts.
- Don't make it sound like a bag of knitting.
- Stays there like a wet rag against the wall.
- Oh dear, my balls fallen off. I've never had that happen before!!
- It was in tune when I bought it!
- The seconds have the same notes but in a slightly different order!

Rachel Pritchard



Player Profile

Ian Hayward

Hello! This is my first article for coda, although I joined ACO nearly two years ago in October 03, after being posted into the Army camp at Bordon from Kirton in Lindsey in North Lincolnshire. I hadn't played in an orchestra since I joined the Army 22 years ago although I'd sort of kept my hand in by playing for various church music groups.

ACO certainly proved a sterner challenge, although I must say I've thoroughly enjoyed playing some wonderful music here, particular favourites being Les Preludes and Beethoven's First.

I missed the first Christmas concert as the army sent me back up North over Christmas 03, but I have since played at the spring concert in Amery Hill, the summer concert in St Lawrence's and the last Christmas concert in Four Marks. In January I dragged the family down from Lincolnshire for Nia's concert in Andover as it was too far to cycle and they had the only car!

Talking of cycling, I've enjoyed the 12 mile round trip to orchestra each week and it proved good training for my Lands end to John O'Groats charity bike ride which I did in ten days last September arriving back just in time for the October concert. Thanks Graham for putting it back a week!

My many thanks go to all those of you who generously sponsored me enabling me to raise over £2000 for Cancer Research UK.

I've made some lovely friends during my time here and so it's with much sadness that I must leave the orchestra this November having reached the end of my career in the Army. I will be moving back to my home in Kirton in Lindsey. I will miss you all and hope to visit you occasionally, perhaps for the odd concert or two.

I hope to join an Orchestra in my new area but I go with very fond memories of playing with ACO. Thanks to all for making me feel a part of the Orchestra in the short time I've been here.

Ian Hayward



Diary

Christmas Concert in Four Marks	7:30 pm	10th December
Last Rehearsal before Christmas break	7:30 pm	14 th December
National Childbirth Trust Christmas Concert At The Harvest Church	6.00 pm	17th December
First Rehearsal after Christmas Break	7:30pm	TBA
No rehearsal – half term		15 th February
Proposed Concert Tour to France		26 th – 30 th May 2006



Thinking of Joining Us?

**We meet in the Drama Studio 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, per term. 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.

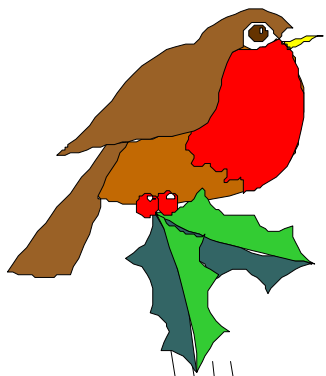
Come and see for yourself.

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

Alton Concert Orchestra: Registered Charity No: 1107683

Printed in the Ian Karten CTEC Centre at Treloar College, Alton (01420 547412)





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 10th December**

