

CHAIRMAN REPORT 30/7/20

2020, "Our Golden Anniversary Year". 50 Years of singing in Harmony until the 12th March 2020 which was our last meeting together because of the pandemic Coronavirus that hit the world and forced the whole of Great Britain to be locked down. Twenty weeks on and we have still not been able to meet. We have been keeping in touch with weekly emails, WhatsApp and weekly zoom calls. We have no idea when we can get together, although things are easing, choirs are still not allowed to meet because of the uncertainty of how singing spreads the virus.

Quite a few things have happened during lock down. We had two babies born in April. Beccy Coppen had a little girl on the 14th April and Lillian Sediles had a little boy on the 27th April. Some lovely news that cheered us all up with their beautiful photographs of their babies.

Some sad news was that Martin Small passed away on the 19th April and because of the restrictions only a small amount of people were allowed at the funeral. We were, however, able to watch it by video link and it was lovely that three recordings that Martin had taken of the NMM singing were used at the service. Martin has left the choir all of his recordings and his archives that he produced of the choir in the time that he was part of it.

I am also sorry to inform you that David and Sandie Farnell have resigned from the Choir. David said that he had been feeling over the past few years that his role as assistant Musical Director had diminished and his services were not appreciated. Sandie and I joined the choir together over twenty years ago and we had lots of fun times going to Germany and doing Pantos together. I will miss singing beside her. She said that she had been struggling with singing as she was having some breathing difficulties. Hopefully we will see them both at our Concerts and Social Events as they have both contributed largely to the NMM history and we thank them for that.

We had a couple of sing outs before the Christmas Period at Whiteley on World Sing Day for Breast Cancer Haven and we were back singing at the Masonic Hall in Southampton for the M&S group Forever Friends.

The Christmas season as always was very busy starting on the 24th November singing at Countess Mountbatten for their Christmas Fair. We sang for the switching on of the lights in Hedge End. As usual we had our chosen charity but this year it was decided that we would have two: Countess Mountbatten which we managed to raise £863.00 and Naomi House and Jacks Place for which we raised £545.00. We did this at several locations: Haskins Garden Centre, Asda, The Cottage Pub. Also choir members donated instead of sending Christmas Cards and we had collection boxes at our Christmas Concerts at the village Hall. Our Concerts were as usual a great success but it did make us realise that the ticket price needs revising especially as we do not charge for refreshments and Father Christmas gifts. We also helped other charities by singing at Sainsbury Fareham for Fareham Rotary and singing at Sainsbury/M&S Hedge End for Friends of PICU.

We rounded off the Christmas season singing to the guests at Botley Park Hotel whilst they were waiting to go for their evening meal.

We went back to the Botley Park Hotel for our Annual Dinner on the 22nd February. Very much on the GOLD theme, the room was decked out with gold balloons and trimmings. We had invited some past members. Many agreed that it was the best Annual Dinner that they had been to. It worked out very well, the food was lovely we had our own DJ, well we had Eric who did a great job, Tom as our founder member gave a great speech and we finished off the evening dancing to the song 'Gold'.

"And then it all went wrong". Unfortunately all of our plans for our Golden Celebrations have had to be postponed. We had already purchased gold tops for the ladies, bow ties, decorations, and a host of 'Gold' music. All of which we had hoped to recoup from the sale of tickets for our Golden Concert and the Summer Spectacular. We have also had to cancel our social events we had planned and the get together with past members at our Cheese and Wine evening. We are not even sure that we will be able to do Christmas Concerts. Such a strange old time it all is.

We have plans to keep interest going through the Autumn/Winter term with Lillian and Chris making tutorials of some of the songs that we didn't get to rehearse very much and then a bit later on some Christmas songs paying attention to the harmonies in the Carols as it has been said by some choir members that they have never had a chance to learn them properly.

I must round up with the thanks to all our Musicians who did their magic for our Christmas Concerts and were getting underway for our Golden Summer Shows, to Chris, who since the lock down has organised our zoom meetings, got us singing, doing quizzes, and to Lillian who has produced a way that we can learn our songs and encouraged us to have a go at doing a virtual choir. For the time being this may have to be the way forward until we can all meet up again.

The Committee, as usual, have been amazing, and sadly we are losing some of them this year. So thanks to Steve, particularly for all of his effort in our Annual Dinner, he did an excellent job organising the Hotel and the guest list. Thanks also to Rebecca who is a great organiser and has taken on many roles. She made everyone make cakes, and she and her daughter were magical with balloons!. It has to be said that Marg's shining glory was the ladies gold tops. None of us will appreciate how much time, frustration and effort she put into retrieving those tops after Hermes had lost not one but two parcels containing our order from Peacocks. She persevered for months and finally got them, and then we didn't get to wear them! Sandie of course has always filled her role brilliantly as Secretary and Music Librarian and will be missed. The remaining members have all worked hard doing what they do best and are looking forward to the challenge of working with new committee members to do the best that we can for the Choir.

As I said in one of my weekly letters, thank you to the most important people. Monica and Julia for making our tea in the break. We had some cakes left in the cupboard before the lockdown, dread to think what they will be like when we get back.

It is a shame that all of these troubled times have come in our exciting year, but hopefully we will be able to resume our meetings, sing together, have some amazing concerts and enjoy being The New Music Makers in the not too distant future.