

## **EPMS Chair's Report 2018-2019 Season**

I am now two years into the three year tenure that I agreed to as Chair of EPMS, and it feels as if it has been a really positive and successful year, with which I am sure the Committee will agree.

### **Committee activities and membership**

The responsibilities of the EPMS trustees/committee are defined by the Charity Commission, in six key areas, namely to:

- Ensure that EPMS is carrying out its purpose for public benefit
- Comply with the governing document and the law
- Act in EPMS' best interest
- Manage resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure that EPMS is accountable

This has once again been a busy year for the Committee. After last year's AGM and appeals for more help on the Committee, Liz Hughes (Tenor) volunteered to take on the role of Secretary for the Committee. She is a great addition to the team, and her comment after attending her first committee meeting was to say that she never realised how much went on behind the scenes to keep EPMS running. Glenice Robinson (Alto) has now also formally joined the Committee as 'social and fund-raising' organiser.

During the year the efforts of the committee have mainly focused on ensuring that our funding is secure and growing both memberships and concert audiences. On the membership front, this 2018-19 season saw ten new members join the choir, and membership held at approximately 100. Sadly two active choir members died during the season, Ken Hodd and Athol Barrington, both missed.

The Committee also decided that we needed to make EPMS' presence in the local more visible, hence the move to use Trinity Methodist Church and Community Centre in the heart of Ellesmere Port as a venue whenever possible. The Centre has excellent facilities which makes it ideal for EPMS events.

### **Concert programme**

As usual EPMS held the two major concerts of the season at Ellesmere Port Civic Hall.

The December concert, which was very well attended, comprised a performance of Haydn's Nelson Mass, The choir has sung this musical tribute to Nelson's victory at the Battle of The Nile before and thoroughly enjoys rehearsing and singing the work; a Bach Cantata and a short work, composed for Christmas by Homilius completed the programme. The musical accompaniment was provided by The Wirral Philharmonic Orchestra and professional soloists.

After Christmas the choir set to work on rehearsals for a gala performance of Karl Orff's Carmina Burana, which took place in April. This concert was something of a new approach for EPMS as the choir joined forces with singers from The Barnby Choir, based in Wilmslow. Our Musical Director is also MD for The Barnby Choir and so this collaboration was an easy fit. The Barnby singers who chose to sing with EPMS each paid a 'come and sing' type fee for joining us, which helped to defray the costs of staging the concert. The Barnby Choir sang Carmina two weeks before our EPMS concert, in a two piano and percussion version in a local church in Wilmslow. This collaboration meant that on the night of the concert there were over 120 singers on the stage, plus a 50 piece orchestra and soloists. The Barnby Choir members were amazed at the experience of singing with a full orchestra in a large concert venue and at the end were asking when we could all repeat the experience of collaborating! The first half of the concert comprised a performance of Beethoven's Choral Fantasia, a forerunner to his later 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony. The pianist for this piece, local musician John Gough, played superbly, and continued with a key part in Carmina,

This concert was the largest performance staged by the choir for many years, and was a huge success. Seats were sold out and, and despite the very significant costs of staging the concert, the planned deficit at the end of the financial year was considerable less than budgeted for. So an excellent concert season indeed!

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### Other musical events

As a 'Community Choir' anyone can join EPMS and no one has to audition, which makes the choir very attractive to people who want to give choral singing a go. But the slight challenge is that many of our members profess to not being able to read music (this I find hard to believe, given what EPMS achieves!) Our MD, Lloyd Buck, had a bright idea of us hosting a Sight Reading Workshop to help address this area, for both EPMS members and singers from other choirs. This event took place in October 2018, at Trinity Church, and was a great success, attracting people from across Cheshire and North Wales.

Then on the Saturday following the December concert it was back to Trinity Church for a lovely Carols and Social, open to the whole community. This was a no-charge social, but funds were raised for the choir through a raffle and stall. There was also a lot of cake and mince pies, plus some hearty carol singing! It was a well attended event, though it was hoped that more local non-EPMS connected people might have attended. The evening took us nicely into the Christmas break.

In March, again at Trinity Church, the choir hosted a wonderful recital by Indigo May, a professional singing duo with personal connections to the choir. This was the outstanding fund-raising event of the year.

### Social activities and fund raising

In November 2018 a 'Gin Tasting' evening was organised, which helped to boost the funds and, as always thanks must be given to David and Beryl Cummings, who at the beginning of April organised their annual charity talk for EPMS, held in Hoole Community Centre. David provided his usual excellent illustrated talk, this time '*Wildlife in the Kruger, the Garden Route and Cape Point National Parks in South Africa*' and significant funds were raised for EPMS.

Otherwise all fund raising activities have centred around the weekly raffle, drinks sales held at rehearsals each week, and a couple of produce stalls in the run up to Christmas and Easter. In these efforts many thanks are given to the 'drinks ladies' (Sheila Nicholas, Debbie Whelligan and Sue Street) and to Joan Wagstaff for her devoted raffle ticket selling.

A mention must also be made of the Annual Dinner, held on 15<sup>th</sup> April at Thornton Hall. This was as usual a great success, and rounded off the 2018-2019. Thanks to Maisie Kench et al for the usual fantastic organisational effort!

And a final note from me; many, many thanks to all the committee for the ongoing commitment and time-consuming efforts made to keep EPMS singing along as successfully as it does!

Marian McCarthy  
Chair of EPMS  
September 2019