

BoS AGM July 2016: Chair's Report

BoS has long been a thriving, talented and committed choir that also knows how to enjoy itself outside of rehearsals. This continues to be the case and is reflected in the year we've had. We've settled in our new 'home' at the Old Junior School. It meets our needs well and has made the move from our previous location an easy one.

This year we've had lots of new people join. Thanks for throwing yourselves wholeheartedly into BoS. Thanks also to those who welcomed you all so warmly last September and helped to make you feel quickly 'at home'. The badges, new this year, (thank you Kate), have also been a real help to me (and others I think) to learn and remember names.

At the last count, Kate told the Steering Group that attendance rates have been steady and good at an average of 71% per week. This really makes a difference to our capacity and capability to learn new songs and to our becoming confident and familiar with them. We currently have 5 places to fill from the 14-strong waiting list and Gill Moore will be speaking with would-be members to establish who will be joining us in September.

One very sad change to our membership this year has been the loss of dear Joan Crookes whose death we mourned and whose life we celebrated with her friends and family last December. A big thank you to Leni, a very dear friend of Joan's, who coordinated visits to her, supported her husband Brian and arranged for a small number of BoS members to sing some of Joan's favourite songs to her at home. Joan sat, smiling and dressed in purple (as a nod to the song "When I am an Old Woman") throughout. Leni also swiftly co-ordinated the making of a beautiful book of photos, memories and appreciations in which Joan delighted during the final weeks of her life. Joan was a warm, big-hearted passionate woman, teacher and political activist. She touched many lives, here and around the world; we miss her and are fortunate to have known her.

There are many things I could say about the amazing events at which we have sung and the repertoire of fabulous songs, new and old, we have learned and continue to master, not least "Under Heaven". I will leave Kate to say more about these. What I do want to talk about is Kate's musical direction, which is, of course, central to BoS and which continues to develop our ability to sing with pleasure and confidence. Kate's not one for the limelight but, on behalf of all of us, I'd like to thank you Kate for such a good year. You are positive, encouraging and have a great sense of fun. You make it look easy. Underneath this lightness of touch is a wealth of experience as a skilful teacher and creative musician. Thank you for the beautiful songs you have taught in this year, many written and arranged by you, as well as by those who inspire you.

I will mention two special occasions with other choirs that particularly reflect Kate's connections with other communities in Sheffield: the Karen people's New Year celebrations in which we took part, and the International Women's Day celebrations with Sage Green Fingers, both of which were memorable and special. It has been really important to sing with and for other groups.

There are a number of other benefits that come with BoS that happen over and above our main programme of rehearsals and which add so much. One is Laurieston, enjoyed by many of you and orchestrated by Lisa, with help from many of those who attended. Thank you to all, especially Lisa, who is so practised at making it happen.

Another benefit is being able to have your very own song written by The Bards and performed by BoS on the occasion of zero birthdays, memorably this year Gill Dean's a la Chipko, complete with knee emoticons and dance routine. Thank you Bards.

The list goes on: a Bos presence at Street Choirs in Leicester, thanks to Gill Upham and others who sang at this; the clothes swap at Heather's place; poetry and puddings evening at Judy's and of course a big social event- Liz and Sarah's delightful wedding at which many of you sang or to which you contributed during rehearsals of the two songs we performed.

Plans are already a-foot to celebrate our 20th birthday next year in style.

Finally, on your behalf, I'd like to thank all the Steering Group members who have contributed **so** much to the smooth-running of BoS throughout the year.

Carol Pickering - June 2016

Steering Group membership 2016/7

Role	Currently	2016/2017 changes
Chair	Carol (P)	Offering to continue in post to support the handover of this role to Wendy in 2017.
Treasurer	Cathy	Offering to continue in post to support the handover of this role to Steph in 2017.
Secretary	Gill (Dean)	Stepping down. Jenny is willing to take on this post.
Membership Secretary	Anna	Stepping down. Gill (Moore) has been working on this in the wings this year and will continue.
IT/Website		Gill Upham. Just begun in 2016, willing to continue.
Social Secretary	Renate	TBA
Gig Co-ordinator	Deena	TBA
Member (s) without portfolio		Heather has kindly offered support for 2016/17.

Gill (Dean) has also offered support for 2016/17.