



*The Association of English Singers & Speakers*

*Honorary Presidents*

*Sir Thomas Allen Michael Chance CBE Sir Nicholas Hytner  
Graham Johnson OBE Dame Cleo Laine  
Patricia Routledge CBE Professor Robert Saxton Dame Harriet Walter*

*Registered Charity No. 1106279*

*[www.aofess.org.uk](http://www.aofess.org.uk)*

## **NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2015**

### **A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

This is my last 'Note' to members as I will be standing down at this year's AGM and Sarah Leonard will be our new Chairman. I will have been in post for ten years, supported by a tremendously experienced committee and wonderful long-term sponsors. Organising four different competitions annually is a never-ending occupation which involves much work looking for venues and adjudicators, in addition to documenting the results for our own Newsletter and national magazines and sending feedback to every competitor at every stage of each event.

The AESS profile has increased nationally: membership and funds are at an all-time high. The Centenary celebrations did much to help in this respect and the Association is lucky to have such supportive Honorary Presidents, many of whom attended events in 2013 and continue to help in any way that they can, as do the past winners of the senior song competition, all of whom are Honorary Members.

Members are far more informed about the AESS and other members' events thanks to email communication and the development of the website: this has also helped to bring widespread members together, making everyone feel part of the Association.

I am sad to leave with the publication of 'The Century of English Song' volumes still unresolved. Enormous efforts have been made by the organising group and others on the committee to encourage the prospective publishers, and the AESS has guaranteed to purchase 250 copies of each of the three volumes, and to pay for all licences etcetera, but the project is still stalled as I write.

The AESS is lucky to be getting a vastly experienced performer and administrator as its new Chairman. Sarah has led AOTOS in the past and has been active in the AESS throughout my time as Chairman. I am looking forward to supporting her and the committee from a 'back-seat' in the countryside.

Please come to the AGM and Annual Dinner on April 12<sup>th</sup>, if you can, to welcome Sarah as the new Chairman. The AESS is highly delighted to have Sir Thomas Allen as Guest of Honour at the Dinner and that Courtney Kenny will provide the entertainment. Thank you all for being members of the AESS. Please continue to support the Association in the future and to help to guide it onward and upward towards its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **From the Chairman Elect – Sarah Leonard**

Time is marching on and I can't believe that from April 12th this year I will become the new Chairman of the AESS. It is quite a daunting commitment, not least because I will be following in the footsteps of our excellent Chairman, Graham Trew. Graham has worked tirelessly to uphold the principles of the Association and to further its work with young people. We have grown considerably in numbers under his watch, and our work to deepen the love of the English Language through words and music is as important as ever.

I will try my best to continue Graham's wonderful work and to keep our four singing competitions, and occasional events, in good health. Over the coming years I would like to expand our work further and I welcome any thoughts from the membership.

In the meantime, please support our AGM and Annual Dinner on April 12th, so that we can give Graham a rousing send-off and show our support for all that he has done for the Society. The 'entertainer' is Courtney Kenny and our guest speaker is Sir Thomas Allen. It will be a very special evening.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can in the coming months and years.