



The Association of English Singers & Speakers

Honorary Presidents

Sir Thomas Allen CBE Michael Chance CBE Sir Nicholas Hytner

Graham Johnson OBE Dame Cleo Laine

Patricia Routledge CBE Professor Robert Saxton

Registered CharityNo. 1106279

www.aofess.org.uk

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2012

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A belated Happy New Year to you all. We are already speeding towards the 2012 Courtney Kenny competition, the AGM and Dinner and the 'springing forward' of the clocks. The passing of time since the last newsletter has given the Association a worthy, new 'Catherine Lambert Junior Recital Prize' winner, but also brought sadness with the loss of Marie Hayward, who served for a long time on the committee, and of our illustrious past chairman, Niven Miller, who had been an Honorary President since stepping down through ill-health in 2004.

Centenary plans are being formulated. It would be good to have more co-opted members of the committee who could help to co-ordinate the offers received from those willing to give concerts or talks, etcetera. We also require offers of help or ideas about ways of publishing the last three English Song volumes and of promoting them. The AESS is going to offer a prize and possible publication for a new composition from students at music colleges and specialist schools in the summer and hopefully next year past winners may give a concert of songs from the newly published volumes. It would be good if members could use the Centenary as a lever to persuade others to join us. If everyone found one new member each in the next year, which does not appear to be a terribly onerous task, we could perhaps be able to announce a membership of 300 at the 2013 AGM.

Please come to the AGM and Annual Dinner. It is our only social event of the year and the only time when members can meet in order to air their views about the Association.

IN MEMORY OF...**MARIE HAWARD SEGAL**

It is with great sadness that the AESS has learned of the death of Marie Hayward Segal towards the end of last year after a long battle with cancer. It is possible to make a donation in Marie's memory at:

[http://www.justgiving.com/remember/2379/Marie Hayward Segal](http://www.justgiving.com/remember/2379/Marie_Hayward_Segal)

Marie will be remembered for her outstanding performances in a repertoire that included the following operatic roles:

Beethoven	Fidelio
Mozart	Donna Anna, Donna Elvira
Puccini	Tosca, Turandot
Strauss	Ariadne, Salome, Elektra (Dyer's wife)
Tchaikovsky	Tatiana, Lisa
Verdi	Lady Macbeth, Abigail, Aida, Amelia, Desdemona, Elisabetta, Leonora
Wagner	Elisabeth, Elsa, Brunnhilda, Isolda, Senta
Weber	Euryanthe

ALSO**NIVEN MILLER**

Niven's funeral was held on Thursday 2nd February at Banbury Crematorium. He had died on 22nd January at the age of 82, having been born on the 24th June 1929. Coral Gould very kindly represented the members of the AESS at the service. The music at the entrance and at the exit was a recording of Niven singing 'The Holy City' and the hymns were 'The Lord is my Shepherd' and 'Abide with me'. Part of the tribute was a radio interview Niven gave on the 'Here and Now' programme in 2005. Niven was a tremendous advocate for the work of the Association and played an important role in acquiring Charitable Status for the AESS, and also in finding sponsors, including Patricia Routledge CBE, for the Senior Competition. Although unable to continue to attend events after the stroke that caused him to give up the Chair, Niven kept in touch by email and only recently provided papers giving more details about the beginnings of the Association to help with the ongoing preparations for the 2013 Centenary.

2011 CATHERINE LAMBERT JUNIOR RECITAL PRIZE

The 2010 winner of the Catherine Lambert Junior Recital Prize came from Lincoln Minster School and it was my idea to ask the school whether it would host one of the first AESS prizes to be held away from the South East. This seemed a good idea at the time and the school was keen to stage the event. When our co-ordinator, Carolyn

Richards, received a huge pack of risk assessment and health and safety forms to complete I began to question the original decision. Carolyn deserves many congratulations for keeping calm and spending much of the weekend of the final in Lincoln in order to bring about a successful conclusion to the competition.

I felt that it should be my lot to drive to Lincoln to host and help judge the event and Marian Lines very kindly joined me. The Minster School is on many sites and the Music School, housed in the Sports Building, was discovered at the top of one of Lincoln's many hills in a one-way system on a severe right-hand bend. It was very easy to miss without sat-navs or eagle eyes and competitors might well have circled Lincoln all day. Despite the best efforts of the school to remedy the problem, the heating in the hall had been turned off by the timing computer and the afternoon was chilly for all.

There were eight finalists. Nick Doig, who opened the afternoon, had a well-developed bass voice but his programme had not been memorised successfully. More time was required for him to feel able to interpret and not simply to remember his programme. Ellie Smit sang prettily, with a light voice. Her programme, however, was based on folk-songs and the many verses needed more colour and dynamic variation to keep the interest. Katarina Melling spoke and sang well and began positively. The programme would have benefitted from more variety in mood and tempo to keep the audience involved. Stella Matias-Wiles rushed into the opening poem of her programme and although she sang well, required more facial involvement and individual word painting. William Anderson began with a confident spoken introduction and has a very pleasing developing tenor, which sounded a little restricted in tone at times. His performance of Walthew's 'O Mistress Mine' in a suitably high key worked well but he chose to sing two Finzi 'Shakespeare' settings from the baritone cycle and could not interpret such a low range effectively. Leila Hills had a rich sound which suited her last song 'Sea Slumber Song', by Elgar, very well. Other songs were not quite so well-judged in tempo, being too rushed but her programme was successful enough for third place. Kirsten Lloyd-Leach was the most successful in combining spoken introduction, words and songs into her theme and she sang with confidence and good facial expression. Her voice needs to develop a wider range of tone colour but she was an obvious runner-up. The last to sing and the winner of the Prize was Elizabeth Thomas. She presented a mature all-round performance, facially and vocally, speaking and singing with thought. The sound and emotion achieved in 'Her Song' by Ireland was the highlight of the day. She also won the prize, given by an anonymous donor for the next five years, for the best spoken element of the day.

I I

would like to thank all the competitors, parents, teachers and supporters who made their way to Lincoln for the final. It is good that the message of the AESS is spread nationwide although many, not least Carolyn, will be relieved if the final in 2012 returns to the South East.

Graham Trew

AESS 2012 AGM & Dinner

*(The **Churchfields Singers** will provide the entertainment at the AESS AGM on March 18th under their director **Jane Hawkes**, and the girls are looking forward to the challenge of performing to a discerning audience.)*

*The **Churchfields Singers*** are a group of twenty teenage girls who have been singing together for three years. They met originally at Churchfields Junior School in South Woodford where they all sang in Jane's lunchtime choirs. They all now attend different secondary schools in the area. The new, 'elite' group began in 2008 with only seven singers, trying out harmony work that they had not been able to tackle in the bigger school choirs, which often numbered 60.

Initially, they rehearsed in Jane's music studio in South Woodford, East London just for fun but soon outgrew the space. The local St Mary's church then came to the rescue; it is here where they can be found on a Sunday afternoon rehearsing music ranging from Britten, Bob Chilcott and Sarah Watts to jazz, folk, pop and, of course, musical theatre. The last is a particular favourite of the girls.

The group sings regularly in local concerts helping to raise funds for charities, wins classes in Music Festivals and in 2010 reached the National Selection Stage of the BBC3 Choir of the Year competition at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford. They recently travelled to Wilhelmshaven in Northern Germany where they gave recitals at Sengwarden Church and in Burg Kniphausen and took part in workshops.

As choir director, Jane is constantly looking for new performing opportunities to widen the girls' horizons, so when a colleague in Bonn suggested an inter-cultural collaboration, this seemed a golden opportunity. The girls were naturally excited at the prospect of travelling abroad to sing. Immediately, work began on some German repertoire. The Happy Wanderer and Stille Nacht were obvious choices. Although they knew the English versions the girls rose to the challenge of learning them in the original for a German speaking audience.

In June last year the choir spent a weekend in Norfolk recording some of their repertoire; this has now expanded to over 40 pieces – all of which are sung from memory. This year's plans include recitals for the Woodford Music Circle and the Little Venice Music Festival, a concert in Norfolk, and a return visit to northern Germany in December.

Jane Hawkes studied voice at the GSMD and has divided her time between freelance performance (as Jane Roberson) and teaching voice and piano.

5

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Final of the COURTNEY KENNY AWARD 2012

This will be held in the Recital Room of Tonbridge School in Kent on the afternoon of Sunday 11th March beginning at 2.00pm. The panel of judges will be Courtney Kenny, Doriel Hulse and Richard Suart.

SWINDON: The Opera

As a celebration of the Queen's Jubilee and with the support of the community of Swindon, The Janice Thompson Performance Trust applied for, sang for - and won - a grant of £60,000 from The Big Lottery Fund.

Matt Fox, JTP Trustee said, "The roof nearly came off the studio when we heard we'd won!"

The winning proposal from the JTP Trust was to create 'Swindon: The Opera', its scope spanning Queen Elizabeth 1st's reign 1952 – 2012, and telling some of the story of Swindon and its people in those 60 years.

The opera will take the form of a grand 'musical extravaganza for the 21st century' and involve Swindon people from the very young to the very old, with music commissioned from Betty Roe MBE, with book and lyrics by Matt Fox. The performance will be produced and directed by Janice Thompson and her team of professional musicians and teachers and involving all the young performing groups in the Trust.

Both Betty and Janice are members of the AESS.

Swindon: The Opera will be performed at **The Steam Museum, Swindon**, on the **7th & 8th of July**, both performances at 2.30.

The Annual General Meeting 2012
followed by
The Annual Dinner

will be held on **Sunday, 18th March**
at the Royal Over-Seas League, Park Place,
St. James's Street, London, SW1A 1LR (nearest tube station Green Park).

The **AGM** will commence at **4.30 pm**.
At **6.15pm** there will be an entertainment given by **The Churchfields Singers**
The bar will be open for purchasing drinks from **6.00pm**.
and **Dinner** will commence at **7.00 pm**.

We are delighted to announce that the Guest of Honour and Speaker will be Honorary
President

Professor Robert Saxton

Tickets, to include a three- course meal and wine, are **£42.50**, available
until the 9th March (no refunds after this date) from:
Jean Hornbuckle, 1 Hillfield Road, West Hampstead, London NW6 1QD
Tel: 020 7794 2395 email: jean@jhornbuckle.orangehome.co.uk

Application form for tickets for the **AESS Annual Dinner** on Sunday 18th March 2012.

Name(s).....

Address.....

Tel:..... Email:.....

I would like tickets @ £42.50, and enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to AESS
and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Special dietary requirements

To : Jean Hornbuckle, 1 Hillfield Road, West Hampstead, London NW6 1QD

Nominations for Committee Members and/or Chairman

I would like to nominate:

for the AESS Committee/Chair (delete as applicable)

Proposed by:-----

Seconded by:-----

Date:-----

**To be forwarded by post or email by the 18th February
to the AESS Secretary,
Judy Hildesley, Taggs Yard, 23 Woodlands Road, London,
SW13 0JZ email: judyhildesley@btinternet.com**