

Forum Minutes: Oxford, October 18th 2008



(1) Hello and welcome

Present: Hannah Collins (NC), Alex Merry (Resources and Merchandise Co & minute-taker), Dave Lloyd (Oxford Rep), Corinne Browne-Marke (Bristol Rep), Fiona Reid (Edinburgh Rep), Alison Blackburn (Aberdeen rep), Hannah Sutherland (Aberdeen Rep), Dorian Dyer-Westacott (Cambridge Rep), Sam Burrell (Warwick stand-in Rep), Emma Fitzpatrick (Leeds Rep), Nikki Holland (Keele Rep), Sam White (London Rep), Simon Mortimore (Oxford President), Emily Barrett (Oxford Music Co), Stephen Nixon (Technical Advisor), Dave 'DNS' Pallett, Aneka & ----- (Keele Rev).

Apologies: St Andrews Rev, UEA, York

Absent: Royal Holloway, Lyon

(2) Matters arising from last forum

A correction for the last forum's minutes – the last WiM with a beach was in 2005 not 2006!

(3) Choir updates

Aberdeen

We have our usual stall at the Fresher Fayre and we also have a 'Give it a go!' session during Freshers' Week this year. As the name suggests it was to give people a taster of Rev and during get-together we taught one of the songs we learned on our trip to London. It was a great success! At an estimate we have about 50 people at rehearsal each week which is fab!

We had our first social of term last week...a karaoke night. We also are hoping to plan an AbRev weekend away in the near future.

Some of us travelled down to Edinburgh on Tuesday for the EdRev rehearsal (Fergus sent footage for forum to watch). Several of us were also down in Edinburgh for RESITS during the summer...a huge thank you to Adam!

We are also looking forward to Northern Weekend Away which is also in Edinburgh this year on 7-9th November and also all the other fun Rev things which will happen throughout the year! :)

We've already started plugging WiM so we can fill Monty the Minibus with AbRevvers again!

Hannah is coming to visit next weekend to meet with the committee.

Bristol

Bristol Rev has had a very good start to the term. The Freshers' Fayre was a success, as about 80 people signed up to the mailing list and quite a few paid straight away. We think our idea of giving out raffle tickets instead of membership cards worked well, as we've had 2 rehearsals so far both with good turnouts. We've had about 40-50 people, including a particularly strong (and large) Alto section, and about 10 men. We're now thinking about our next performance, which will be the Inter-society Christmas Concert in the first week of December. Steve, our band man, is in

the process of putting together a band for this and had interest from some of the new members. We've also been asking members for feedback regarding song suggestions and any solos or small group numbers. We've had an enthusiastic and positive response, including 'Adiemus' and 'California Dreamin'.

Cambridge

Cambridge has had one rehearsal so far since the start of term, with about 60 people in attendance. The plans for the rest of the term so far are to host the SWA. On that Sunday afternoon they will be singing at the turning on of the Christmas lights at 4.20 ish on the 16th Nov. The Cambridge Rev concert will be on 1st Dec and they will possibly be singing carols for one of the student charities.

Edinburgh

Rev has had a great start to the year with lots of interest at the Freshers Fair. This has resulted in loads of new faces – great as several members have left us this year. After a slight problem with lack of teachers, rehearsals have got off to a good start, and we are on track for our concert (28th & 29th November). EdRev will also potentially be singing at the CU carol concert.

We still have a few money problems as I mentioned at previous forum, but Thursday's bake sale should help! The concert committee are being creative with their planning ideas.

Last Tuesday we had sectional meals with a guys' meal and 3 for the girls! It gave a great atmosphere to rehearsals except that people were too full to do physical warm up!

It was great to have Alison, Fergus (NRW) and Alison with us on Tuesday, especially as they brought Haribo! Fergus chatted to the choir about National stuff which is particularly good as we look forward to the Northern weekend away.

Additional comments: busking may help raise money if choirs have financial problems.

Keele

We are going from strength to strength choir-wise especially with numbers and our male section. We can now have a tenor and a bass section.

We have lots planned this year; plenty of trips to see other choirs in the hope to get more nationally involved, socials, and of course the 10th birthday party which everyone is invited to (Facebook should keep you up-to-date).

We are having a few committee problems regarding national vs. non-national people but we are keeping a close eye on in the situation, and promoting national / regional events.

Finances are OK and, although we are all very busy, Rev seems to be going very well this year. Concert is on 22nd November from 4-6, and there is a Facebook event.

London

London has a lot of sopranos and not many altos. Since last forum they have had a concert and cabaret in the summer and rehearsals have been taking place all summer for those still in London. The winter concert will be on 28th Nov in the same venue as the rehearsals. This term

new members have been attending, with new members arriving both before and after Freshers' Week.

Leeds

Leeds had just under 50 people at the 1st rehearsal including some national people, and have since maintained about 35 in the choir. There is still only 1 (possibly 2) man. They will not have concert this semester. There is a lack of teachers for songs currently in Leeds, so workshops and any visiting conductors would be greatly appreciated.

Oxford

Good start to term with lots of new enthusiastic freshers (more than existing members)! We now have more girls than boys for the first time in nearly a year. We're just about to move rehearsal venue and have yet to make any plans for the term as plans are likely to be number-dependent. An ex-music co came to do a conducting workshop, and we're hoping to do more workshops regularly.

Royal Holloway

Absent.

Update via email in November - The choir is doing really well at the moment. We were invited to give a performance at a party for the University of London Air Squadron which we did on Friday 31 Oct, and we are currently getting ready for our Christmas concert in December which we do with another choir on campus.

St Andrews

Apology.

UEA – Apology and emailed update

We've only had a couple of rehearsals so far this term. We had 50 people at our first rehearsal, however this dropped to about 20/25 people for the next which is a more usual number for UEA. From this week we are moving our rehearsal day from Monday to Thursday, due to room bookings hopefully this won't effect numbers. We have a few performances lined up nearer Christmas, busking outside one of the shopping centres in Norwich on the 6th Dec and then singing at 'Carols in the Square' with the salvation army outside the students union on the 10th Dec.

Additional comments: In the 2nd week of December Cambridge may be able to visit.

Warwick

Roughly normal number of attendance at rehearsals of about 80-100. There will be a tour this academic year to Trinidad and Tobago possibly during Warwick's Easter break. There will be a concert probably at the end of this term and maybe singing at Coventry Cathedral for the CU carol concert.

York

Apology.

(4) Updates from National Staff

The National Staff changeover every Summer and the team for this year are:

National Coordinator: Hannah Collins

National Administrator: Kelly Woodward

National Advisor: Naomi Alty

Legal Issues Advisor: Tony Williams

Finance Administrator: Philippa Thew

Esther's Chain Coordinator: Max Barnish

Resources and Merchandising Co: Alex Merry

Southern Regional Worker: Hayley Baldwin

Central Regional Worker: Chilel Sanyang

Northern regional Worker: Fergus Kinnon

Southern Intercessor: Kate Bell

Central Intercessor: Anneka Beavis

Northern Intercessors: Lis McQueen, Alison McQuillin

Design Secretary: Paul Harrison

Merchandise Admin: Verity Barnes

Music Admin: Isobel Pitcher

Technical Advisor: Stephen Nixon

Website Team Co & Fundraising Co: Ally Hook

Workshop Co: Jess Baker

Web Updates Admin: Pierre Schramm

Web External content admin: Tizzy Faller

Some positions still need to be filled: Friends of Rev Worker and some web team positions – events, news, multimedia and email.

Finances:

Philippa is looking onto possible online payment options for Weekends Away and WiM.

Fundraising and Friends of Rev are two key areas that allow us to have regular amounts supporting the choirs and staff team. During the last few forums we have discussed Friends of Rev and ways of appealing to more Revvers/ex-Revvers in becoming regular donors to revelation. Ideas have been to produce a regular newsletter, membership cards allowing discounts on CDs and concerts.

Points of view offered this forum were that the ideas were good but need classifying.

- Would saying all FoR card holders get in to concert for concession price work? Not all choirs have concession prices for concerts and not all concerts have their prices set by revelation as sometimes choirs sing at events organised by arts festivals/organisations etc. It was decided that where prices are set by Revelation, FoR card holders can pay concessions price, or where that doesn't exist, receive a £1 discount.
- Would all choirs be able to afford a set amount off their CDs? Choirs could set their own discount amounts.

- Would the Friends of Rev card expire? It was decided that to would be too demanding of time and resources to re-issue cards annually.
- What would happen if someone stopped donating? It was decided it is unlikely that so many people would stop donating and still continue to use their cards to such an extent that it would cause a negative effect on Rev's income, so if someone stops donating we wouldn't need to send a 'banned person' message around every choir! We will trust Friends of Rev to be honest in their use of the card.
- What would the newsletter include and how regularly would it be sent? It should be simple and consistent – quarterly, with concert dates, CD releases, merchandise, choir and national news.
- If a Friends of Revver wants to donate specifically to one choir rather than support all Revelations, what would happen? If someone donates to a charity and says specifically what it is for then the charity must spend the money only for that purpose. Organising that type of giving through the scheme and getting individual choirs to produce newsletters would be complicated so forum decided that it wouldn't be a Friends of Rev option, and if there was a lot of call for giving to individual choirs then it could be set up by the choir in question as direct donations into their own account rather than the charity.

Action point: HC to write an email about FoR to send National Reps who will send to any graduates who have recently left their Revelation.

Action Point: All to ask choirs about being Friends of Rev worker.

Hannah asked if everyone knew about who we are allowed to sell CDs to. Not every choir was fully aware that we can only sell CDs to people within Revelation ie members of any Rev choir and Friends of Rev.

This sort of information has been handed out to previous National Reps and should be made available at least to all committees and passed on from each National Rep to the next. Many Reps present did not have a 'national folder' but would appreciate one. All National reps are also responsible for ensuring the Big Book is kept safe and allow their choir and committee to see and use it whenever needed and ensure it is passed onto the next national rep when committees change over.

Action Point: Hannah to email all National Reps as many useful documents as National reps should have.

Action Point: Reps to create a National Rep folder for their use and future use by their choir.

Resources:

The Resources Team are able to provide choirs with a wide range of resources and expertise. The Design Secretary can design posters and CD covers for example and can offer support, ideas or create the design for the choir.

Merchandise is organised by Verity, who has a large back catalogue of National and sometimes individual choir CDs for sale and is always on the lookout for new ideas from choirs in terms of national merchandise. Ideas put forward by forum were national hoodies with the possible option

of leaving the back blank so choirs could then print their own logo/names etc on the back too, plush Burpee soft toys (Burpee / Burpy is the little jumping figure who features in all Revelation logos), lunch boxes, wind up Burpees, caps, and key fobs.

Music is organised by Isobel. Please make sure music coordinators in each choir have given their contact details to her (music@rev.org.uk). In the Big Book is a photocopyable form which all people who arrange/write music for Rev should sign, then the music and form can be sent to Isobel (via post or scanned and emailed) and shared between the choirs which helps every choir. Technical support, advice and expertise is given by Stephen e.g. sound, lights, recording, videoing. Between Stephen and Dave they have quite a collection of equipment that can go to Revelation concerts to do these things. Stephen can also produce CDs at a better price and in more suitable quantities for your choir than you will find in outside companies. For any or all of the above, contact technical@rev.org.uk The WiM CD from Easter this year is about 3 months behind schedule due to problems outside Revelation's control, but it is progressing! Hopefully there will soon be a new website with password access for Revvers to listen to Rev music or use for teaching/learning the song. It is hoped to include music sung at Rev events and also recordings of individual parts. There may also be warm-ups recorded and included there. Some videos of songs and warm ups are already on YouTube (search for Revelation Rock-Gospel Choirs).

Jess's role is a new one for this year, collating, storing and sharing out workshop resources to all choirs. It would be helpful to know which workshop resources choirs would like so we know what's most important to start collating resources for. Forum suggested 'teaching workshops' (and ideas to make teaching easier e.g. team teaching at once), 'conducting workshops', and 'warm up workshops'. Jess will produce these as packs that she could deliver to choirs or choirs could deliver themselves.

As part of discussing teaching songs, forum also discussed ways choirs could encourage new teachers/conductors for songs as some choirs are finding this an issue. Some ideas were:

- get people who are interested in teaching to teach in a group e.g. one of each SATB, with each person teaching one part, then come together as a choir.
- Start by asking them to do familiar warm ups
- Always congratulate all teachers afterwards even if they found it hard – boost confidence
- Make sure music cos are not feeling pressurised by teaching too much, or doing so much no-one else gets a chance (Aims and Values!)
- Experienced teachers may offer comments during teaching which, though intended as helpful, can feel off-putting for a new teacher. If this happens in your choir, the committee member who looks after the choir's environment may want to speak to the person involved nicely, and privately! Everyone needs a chance to try out their own teaching style and gain confidence gradually; even the most experienced teacher/conductor started off nervous and unsure.

The Website Team is currently Ally, Pierre and Tizzy but we do need more people to help. The website will soon be undergoing a re-design. Forum suggested the following to be important and useful content: up-to-date staff contact details, key dates for national, regional

and choir events, sheet music library, Friends of Rev information, choir information and contact emails (choirname@rev.org.uk – choirs should decide and tell Ally where this address should forward to), photos (not lots but enough to show recent events and give a good impression of what Rev is and does), news and RSS feeds so members can be alerted when new content is added to the site, including resources and event dates.

(5) National Update

The new staff team are getting into their roles, and will hopefully have a weekend away in January to meet as a team to ensure they're doing all they can to support Revelation.

Hannah thanked everyone for replying to emails about the Weekends Away, allowing for quick date and location organisation.

Committee Sessions

Hannah has already been to visit some committees to tell them about everything the charity can do for their choir and the support available to them, as well as letting committees have some time to talk about their own roles and the choir as an individual choir and as part of the network. So far Leeds and Keele have had this session and Aberdeen are doing it next weekend (24-26 Oct).

Due to the Weekends Away Hannah is busy for most of the rest of this term, but would still like to visit all committees this year, or a Regional Worker/staff member visit in her place to carry out the same session. If a choir would like to carry out the session but can't find a date that suits Hannah/Regional Worker, then Hannah can send resources for the committee to use by themselves and Hannah is more than happy to discuss any issues or questions arising from that via email/phone. London and Edinburgh are doing the committee session in this way soon.

New events

Hannah reminded the National Reps that forum is an opportunity to represent their choirs' opinions in any decisions that need to be made for Revelation as a whole and also for choirs to suggest new ideas for Revelation, for example new events. The suggestion was made for a Revelation tour, perhaps in the summer and maybe to raise money for Rev.

Some opinions and ideas following on from this suggestion were:

- Publicity would be difficult if in many different places or in places without a 'Rev base'
- Organisation of many venues would take a considerable amount of time and energy
- We could join in as part of local music/arts festivals
- We could promote/raise money for local causes (e.g. the concert in April some people took part in - Alex Jenner's home church were raising money for refurbishment.)
- Choosing to go on a summer tour may stop people being able to attend RESITS as well due to available time off work
- To avoid 'competing events' we could combine the two – ending or starting the tour with RESITS.

RESITS

This year the event was very kindly held in an EdRevver's flat as the Church of Scotland venue was unable to host the event this year due to changes in regulations within the Church of

Scotland regarding unaffiliated groups sleeping in churches. This regulation doesn't necessarily affect other denominations' churches in Scotland but it is worth checking.

Action point: Hannah to email / write to the Church of Scotland to see if Rev could be made an affiliated organisation so future events could go ahead in CoS venues.

(6) WiM 2009 (Details about current WiM organisation and open job positions)

West Kirby URC is the WiM venue for Easter 2009 (4-12 April). Pre-WiM, the organisational weekend that the WiM team attend, will be in the WiM venue from 20-22 Feb '09. A booklet describing all possible WiM team jobs will be made available to all National Reps via post and email soon, and Reps should make these accessible to everyone in their choirs. Hayley would like to appoint the Sponsorship and Secretary/Treasurer position by December so please encourage applications. All other positions will need to be applied for by the beginning of February.

(7) Regional Weekends Away 2008

The weekends are coming up soon: Northern is 7-9 November, in Edinburgh. Southern is 14-16 November, in St Barnabas Church, Cambridge. Central will be 28 – 30 November, Heslington church, York. A few years ago forum decided it was reasonable for the cost of each weekend for each Revver was £15. Forum felt this was still acceptable. It was suggested that a page about the events should be on the website so National Reps could copy the information into emails to send in group emails to their choir members and/or read to the choir.

There is normally a sign-up sheet on the website, if this is working it will be the way to confirm attendance, but Facebook event pages have been set up for now. Phil (Finance Admin) is also looking into the possibility of paying for events such as Weekends Away and WiM online through payment systems such as Paypal.

Action point: HC create email and webpage for Reps to send to choir members about events.

(8) LCGC Tour

The LCGC tour as Reps have received emails about still looks like going ahead but our contact is currently on tour abroad so there is no recent news. The rough plan which is subject to change is likely to be: LCGC run a workshop with the Rev choir, Rev will have advertised and promoted the concert, and LCGC perform in a concert, joined at some point by the Rev choir to perform the songs learnt in the workshop. The cost for a choir for the workshop is as yet unknown as is what will happen with money raised from ticket sales. Choirs will be updated as soon as Hannah is contacted.

(9) A.O.B.

Dave arrived at forum to talk about his sound equipment – he has purchased some sound equipment (speakers etc) for personal interest but is willing to travel to choirs particularly within the Southern region if choirs need the equipment for their concerts.

WiM CDs are running about 3 months behind due to technical hitches. If you want to be alerted to when it is ready, you can register on Stephen's page <http://wim.woo.hu>

Sam B clarified (after receiving information by text) that Warwick's tour to Trinidad and Tobago will not clash with WiM and they also have a new president – Alex Rendell.

(10) Next forum arrangement

Saturday 24th January at either St. Andrew's or UEA.

(11) Thank you and close

We finished by watching Fergus's video diary of his visit to EdRev.