

## Forum Minutes January 2008



### **1. Hello and welcome**

Present: Hannah (National Co), Jenni (Finance), Verity (Merchandise), Kelly (Admin), Emma (Cambridge), Stephen (Technical & Keele), Debbie (Edinburgh), Mike (Bristol), Amber (CRW and Liverpool), Phil (Leeds), Amara (York), Steve (Warwick)

Apologies: Oxford, Aberdeen, Royal Holloway, UEA, Bangor, St Andrews, Lyon

### **2. Matters arising from last forum**

The minutes of the previous Forum meeting were approved.

### **3. Choir updates**

#### Cambridge

"We had a very successful last term, with numbers settling to about 65-70 regular attendees. Our Christmas concert went well, with about 85 choir members and an audience of about 200. It was also fairly successful financially! Having begun a band list at Freshers Fair this year, this made life for our Band Coordinator significantly easier, and this is planning to be continued. We had a good time, with some rousing Rev classics, and some new arrangements (such as Cliff Richard's version of "O Little Town" complete with cheesy gestures, and a song from Muppet Christmas Carol). We also spent a morning carol singing in the local shopping centre, which was good fun, if a bit slapdash, as our command of the lyrics was a bit variable!

It was a good term for Rev from the social side, too – our last "rehearsal" of term took place in Pizza Express, with excellent turnout! We also had a silly games night, and social activities are set to continue this term, with a formal dinner organised for next week.

On the National side, the term was not so successful, with only two choir members attending SWA. This was mainly as it was close to the concert, so we didn't do a great job of getting people to go, as we were concentrating our efforts elsewhere. It was also right at the end of term, so I for one was suffering from essay fatigue and couldn't make it!

So far this term is shaping up well. We've had one rehearsal, with about 70 people. We're also in the surprising – and very fortunate - position of having more conductors than songs this term, including several freshers and people who haven't conducted before. Because of this, Emily is going to run a conducting workshop to initiate the unenlightened into the wonderful world of conducting!

We are, however, still having problems finding a venue for our Lent term concert. We now have somewhere booked, but it's less than ideal, so we're still looking into other options. We've already booked the concert hall for both concerts next year, so the next committee will avoid this problem!

I'm also working hard at work recruiting potential WiMmers – I have high hopes for a better Cambridge turnout than last year!"

### Keele

Keele Rev has had a very successful and productive first term. Throughout the term the choir was working towards a number of events which we were asked to sing at at the end of term. These included singing at the Christmas Market in Keele Hall (money raised went towards MacMillan nurses) which we have been asked to sing at again this year, the World Aids Day Service, the Christmas concert and our concert which was very well attended and helped to raise money for a couple of delivery beds for a maternity ward in West Bengal. We hope to repeat the success of the choir this term with a concert at the end of term.

Last term we welcomed a number of foreign students to the choir from Kenya, Germany and Canada and we managed to incorporate songs from their cultures which we hope to continue doing this term. Unfortunately many of them were only here for a semester so have gone back to their respective countries but we have attracted a few more this year at the refreshers fayre so we look forward to hearing what they can offer the choir.

Many of our new members are very keen to teach songs to the choir which we are very keen to encourage these will include a Boney M song, a Swahili song, and some Lion King bits. Our first rehearsal went really well, with new and old faces turning up to sing and we managed to learn 3 songs which all sounded really good. We are hoping to take the choir to a musical at a nearby theatre later this term as one of our socials (unfortunately High School Musical seems to have sold out which was our first choice), but still need to decide on what we will see. We are looking forward to another fun, exciting and productive term with the choir!

### York

Last term's Christmas concert was a success – people, audience and money! This term has been easygoing – a relaxed atmosphere with no concerts and new conductors. Next week York Rev are busking for charity, and there is also the Rag Parade where university societies come together and dress up! They will also be promoting WiM as it is in such a convenient location this year.

York Rev are also trying to have diverse social nights, with not just pubs/clubbing, but also bowling. There will be an AGM at the end of term. There are currently about 6-7 men attending rehearsals, with 20-25 people total attending regularly

### Edinburgh

“EdRev’s having a good year so far with about 80 members and around 60 people coming on a regular basis. We have attracted some new members this semester after our concert before Christmas and the “re-freshers” fair which took place in the second week of term.

Our Winter concert (23 November) went extremely well and we nearly sold out our one night venue selling around 500 tickets. The concert was filmed properly for the first time by one of our members’ parents and we’ve been able to make and sell DVDs to the choir (for the low price of £3). The choir and audience both really liked the venue with its great acoustics, tiered stage and balcony and consequently we’ve decided to do two nights at the same venue at Easter which is booked for Friday 14 and Saturday 15 March (we hope this will mean more national than normal will be able to make it). Our new venue will mean we have 400 more tickets available than in previous years, but we hope with a really big publicity push we can have two great nights.

We also enjoyed the Northern Weekend Away in Aberdeen to which 7/8 of us went. This semester socials are at a peak with our annual Burn's Night supper and ceilidh tomorrow night (27 Jan) in the Union and our weekend away which is the 8-10 February (which this year is at a new venue in the highlands). We are also getting involved in the student festival which is this coming week by having our normal rehearsal in a more central location to hopefully make it open to anyone who wants to come along, and are getting together to watch Sister Act in a local bar on Wednesday evening."

### Bristol

"Last term, our social activities and rehearsals were successful in keeping a reasonable sized choir going to the joint society Christmas concert. This was a big success with everybody who went to see not having a bad word to say about any of the performances.

As the start of this term, our first rehearsal saw just under twenty people turn up, however the second rehearsal was much more promising. Due to the lack of men, specifically tenors, the choir has been splitting our altos into two sections, and giving one group the tenor line. The tenors that do still turn up (the whole two of us) are currently not having any problems with singing bass, despite both having learned the tenor line previously to some of the songs.

We are going to keep the active social scene going, with a trip to see "The Songs of Sister Act" performed by the London Community Gospel Choir on the 4<sup>th</sup> February. Ideas for other socials, including a repeat of last year's picnic are yet to be finalised.

Our annual concert is booked for the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> March, in St Paul's Church in Clifton. More details will become available on Facebook as the term progresses."

### Liverpool

"We've had a hard time of things lately, haven't had a rehearsal since November due to lack of numbers but the Exec have met three times since then to discuss the way forward.

We are going to start back with rehearsals on Monday 28 January in a new venue – the university Catholic Chaplaincy. We're gonna see how this works out.

We've had a few problems with the SU recently to do with membership and because of our numbers we're not a recognised society anymore (need 10 members to be a recognised society to hire rooms etc.) but we hope to be able to sort this out soon.

A couple of us went to visit Keele for their Christmas concert in December and really enjoyed it. We would love to build a strong friendship with Keele (as our closest choir) and possibly do some social or other events with them in the future."

### London

"The choir has gone from strength to strength recently and we have been learning plenty of new songs in rehearsals, including most recently "The Sweetest Thing". Numbers have continued to be around 15-20 at most rehearsals. We will be voting in a new committee next week and look forward to more people getting involved in running the choir.

Since the last Forum, we hosted the Southern Weekend Away in a church in Islington and performed in the church on the Sunday morning. It was well attended and gave us the chance to learn new songs, participate in interesting and useful workshops

and get to know people from other choirs better. We also watched some live comedy at the church on the Saturday evening.

The weekend after that we sang at a Christmas street fair in Belgravia. Unfortunately it rained, but we still enjoyed ourselves.

Looking ahead, we will be singing at a concert in a church on 8 March, and we hope to bring plenty of people along to WiM."

Additional update from Jenni:

Unfortunately London Rev has been de-recognised as a society as they failed to meet the requirements of the ULU (needed twenty forms to be signed by students; they got three) and therefore have no rehearsal venue etc. The committee is looking into alternatives and wonder if a Revelation choir HAS to be a student society to continue?

Hannah explained that the Aims and Values do suggest that choirs should be "university-based" but that this isn't a hard and fast rule. If possible, a choir can try to build its numbers first, and then become a university society to gain student members. Amber compared this with Bangor Rev, who have experienced similar situations.

Jenni explained that there is stiff competition in London as each university has its own gospel choir, and unfortunately the ULU will not allow London Rev to be re-affiliated, therefore it will be harder to obtain a free, central venue and will perhaps need to consider local churches.

### Leeds

Last semester was good. They staged a concert with around 30 people in the choir, and 30 people in the audience... Unfortunately the band pulled out three days prior to the concert, but a nice pianist stepped in to help.

Leeds Rev has a full committee this year, and have so far only had one rehearsal this term where twelve people attended. The committee are meeting to discuss ways to attract new members. This term is reasonably short (only six weeks left!), so there are discussions over how many new songs to attempt this term. Leeds are also still struggling slightly with National involvement and Phil is finding it hard trying to convince the rest of the committee. Leeds are having their AGM this April, so Hannah has suggested the possibility of exec training around that time.

Hannah also recommended that we can all help Leeds as a National group, using Facebook to contact and befriend Leeds Revvers, and gently encouraging them to come to WiM...! ☺

### Warwick

The previous two terms were good for Warwick Rev, with steady numbers of approximately 80 regulars (previously rehearsals were a "core" of ~30 regulars and other members differed each week). They are trying to make it even more open and welcoming than usual, and have had a variety of socials: a ceilidh, ice skating, pizza & bowling, Soweto Gospel Choir in concert, and even a trip to London to see Les Misérables.

The National Rep attended the Aberdeen Forum weekend, which he still remembers to be one of the best weekends of his life. ☺

Five Warwick Revvers attended the Southern Weekend Away, and all reported that they had a good time.

Warwick Rev performed in an old people's home in November, and had a Christmas concert on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec that saw Westwood church filled! They also sang in the Christian Union's carol concert and went carol singing.

They will be holding a concert on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March in Coventry Methodist Central Hall.

The highlight of the term for Warwick Rev was when twenty-one people went to Barbados. They taught some songs in local schools (including the school that pop sensation Rihanna attended!). In one of the other schools, Steve taught 900 children "I Like The Flowers". The group also appeared on Barbadian television, went jet-skiing, had a go on a catamaran, went swimming with turtles, snorkelling... and danced in the reggae bar!

This term so far, Warwick Rev recruited some new members at the Refreshers Fair and also participated in One World Week.

#### Lyon (update from Pierre)

Regarding the concert, reading more of the Messageboard would have provided you with Youtube links to three of the five songs we did - [www.youtube.com/user/mathendacil/](http://www.youtube.com/user/mathendacil/) - on top of those we did He Is Worthy and Sanctuary. It was not a Rev concert per se; we appeared as part of a bigger student concert. We were actually the opening act for the non-classical music part. And the printed programme features Lyon Revelation rock-gospel choir. ☺

Obviously I won't be able to attend the Forum soon (unless you want it to be hosted in Lyon, but for some reason I doubt that...), but regarding our progress - well the four of us that were at the actual concert (one for each part, how lucky is that) sort of form the "hardcore" of the choir, i.e. they come every single rehearsal and love it. Amongst those four, Laura, the alto, had not sung since primary, and never had a concert, so I'm really pleased with the fact that she is starting now, and getting more confident (and discovering hidden talents).

So in terms of positive points for the progress - we've had a semi-concert; we have a strong basis for this term at least; and the A&V really are at the core of the choir (at least the way I'm seeing it; and the members have read the A&V and heartily agree with them). Plus there's Haribo all the time!

The negative points now –

a) as of so far, I've been the only one to teach songs (the conducting I've done doesn't count, as I was really singing at the same time - no choice there, or we wouldn't have had our four parts). I obviously don't want that, especially as I don't have that much time this year; but nobody has "dared" teach a song [basically because, or so they say, they don't know songs] - except for one attempt at teaching "Circle of Life" which ended up, well, nowhere really (dropped by the "teacher"). So that's not really good insofar as it may give the impression the choir revolves around me, which it does not - and thus lead into a vicious circle.

b) the question of how long the choir is going to last - i.e. will it survive my departure, probably at the end of the year? [this may come across as egocentric, but I know for a fact that getting people to take over societies \*is\* tough here. I have problems with the other one I've created...]

c) I haven't seen the Big Book

d) Due to Easter break dates, no-one will be able to go to WiM this year :- ( [And I won't even be able to assist to the concert... I have the only exams of the year the Tuesday and Wednesday after then...]; I am doubtful about Piazza (people will be on summer traineeships, though it is still a possibility).

e) we're still few.

Not so much of a problem for f), at least in the light of the A&V, but no-one in the choir has special musical talents, so we won't be able to share any music resources for some time thus far.

Oh, and g) I'm the one-man exec :-s

Please let people know that Lyon Rev rehearsals are held on Thursdays in the evening, and that they are all more than welcome :-), and that if warned in advance I might be able to provide accommodation."

#### Bangor (update from Ty)

"As for Bangor Rev, it's on ice at the moment (not in the starlight express way though unfortunately, more of the frozen way wow amazing idea though, WIMOI - Week in March, on ice! I'll get back to you on that one....)

Hopefully things will start moving with it soon, I've been landed (only Lord knows how) with the job of being musical and artistic director of the theatre society at uni so I'm currently running around trying to get "a Thoroughly Modern Millie" underway, which brings me onto Rev, for this production I have a chorus line (i.e., onstage choir) who I am slowly but surely turning into a gospel choir, without them knowing, they will know eventually though, I'm doing Revvy warm ups with them and even learning a few little Rev songs to get their harmony singing up to scratch so there is hope yet."

#### Aberdeen (update from Cat)

"Although numbers dropped after the huge turnouts at the first few rehearsals of last term, we have been really encouraged by a core group of members (many of them new this year) attending regularly. We were particularly pleased to have two new committed MEN joining us!!!!

We learned loads of great songs, and I think that managing to master some fairly challenging songs, like We're All In This Together and My Soul Says Yes, really gave the choir a big boost!

We sang two songs at the wedding of one of our member's sister – which I think was a first for AbRev. It was just a really nice occasion and we felt very honoured to have been asked.

We also sang in Starbucks at the end of term, and I think lots of fun was had by the choir, the coffee-drinkers, and the Starbucks staff (who were jigging away behind the bar)!!

We were very happy that our Christmas concert was packed out, and I think, again, everyone had fun! We had a band for the first time in a long while, which was a great help.

NWA, although unfortunately pretty poorly attended by Aberdeen, despite being held in Aberdeen (I think due to the busy-ness of the end of term with extra rehearsals, Starbucks and the concert, and people going home for the holidays) it

was a good weekend – so thanks to all the Edinburgh folk who came up for that! Hopefully next year there will be a St Andrews contingent too!

This term we are kicking off with a choir Weekend Away (another first for AbRev) to Kincaig, near the Cairngorms the first weekend of February – the idea is that it will be a good, fun and relaxing end of exams and start of a new term!”

#### St Andrews (update from Andrew)

The St Andrews choir started in October having been adapted from the (very) few remaining members of a previously established choir. We managed to attract a number of new members from all years of study and to form a proper working choir. On Wednesday 21st November we had an EGM to elect a committee to run the choir.

Since then the committee has met 3 times in the weeks immediately following. In this time the choir managed to choose and successfully prepare a piece to perform at the St Andrews University Christian Union Carol Concert on Wednesday 19th. The performance of "Steal Away" was a great success due to the hard work (and lots of extra practice!) from everyone involved.

After the long interruption caused by exams (and skiing holidays) the choir plans to meet back in around mid-February. From there we will be looking to forming ourselves into an official society and to taking a greater role in the national organisation of Revelation Rock-Gospel Choirs."

#### Oxford (update from David)

"OxRev has settled comfortably into a new term and a new venue. We have had a recent change of committee. Appointments were made for the roles of President, Treasurer, Music Coordinator and National Rep. Our new Music Co has hit the ground running and is full of ideas for new songs. We've learnt two in only the first week of her command. We also had a group brainstorming session where all the choir members brought suggestions forward.

We have a steady group of about 20, and are pleased to welcome back some returning members that decided they couldn't stay away! A concert is in the pipeline for February, hopefully this will be an ideal springboard for the year, and a chance to recruit more singers!"

#### **4. Updates from National Staff**

Merchandise (Verity) – there are still plenty of National CDs for sale (various titles at various prices), and Verity is looking into Rev lanyards.

Finance (Jenni) – Jenni told everyone that the Rev account is doing well at the moment.

Amber introduced herself as the new Central Regional Worker. ☺

Technical (Stephen) – Stephen explained that he was thinking of making a Rev Facebook application, and asked for ideas for what it might contain – suggestions included virtual Paper Plate Awards, a map of Revelation and the ability to become a "fan" of Burpee.

### Technical Training

Stephen offered technical training workshops for choirs that want training in recording/sound for concerts etc. Hopefully the workshop would be 1 day at a weekend, where Stephen can teach people how to set up the equipment and learn to use it to record 1-2 songs, without the stress of a concert situation.

Stephen listed some dates he is available before WiM:

9-10 February

1-2 March

15-16 March

More dates will be available after WiM. Contact Stephen on [sn@woo.hu](mailto:sn@woo.hu) for more details.

## **5. National Update**

### Staff Training Weekend

The Staff Training Weekend was held in West Kirby on 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> January. The National Staff Team are there to support everyone, and so the team spent the weekend working on their six month plans and how best the team can support the choirs.

Hannah reminded everyone that the team are there to help **everyone** in Rev, and encouraged everyone to keep in contact with each other.

### The Big Book

It's finished!! A **HUGE** thank you to Naomi and everyone else who helped complete the Big Book.

The Big Book is all about Rev! It has information on committee positions (and job descriptions), how to set up a Rev, suggestions for how to run rehearsals, conducting, Pause For Thoughts, Weekends Away, etc. Hannah stressed that the book is for guidance only, it's not a rule book! ☺ The book does not have to be kept pristine – each copy has been printed on one side of each page, leaving the other side blank for Revvers to write in their own experiences and hints/tips for future Revs (e.g. recommended companies, concert venues, etc).

Hannah suggested that each choir's Big Book remains with the National Rep of each Rev, so that it is easier to check at Forum that changing committees are passing it on to the next one.

A PDF version of the Big Book will also be available on the Rev National website soon.

### The Revelation Resolution

Some choirs' National Reps are still to sign the Revelation Resolution. These choirs are:

Lyon

Oxford

Royal Holloway

St Andrews

UEA

York

### New choirs

Lyon and St Andrews are currently going through the process of affiliation. Hannah or the appropriate Regional Worker will be visiting and/or keeping in contact to check on their progress.

Hannah reminded all choirs to keep raising money for National – if you're having an event, please consider National, for example, inserting Friends for Revelation leaflets into concert programmes.

Hannah also encouraged choirs to support their neighbouring choirs (e.g. having socials together, visiting each other's rehearsals), and also ask for help if you need it!

## **6. WiM 2008**

22-30 March 2008, Headingley Methodist Church, Leeds  
(Pre-WiM: 22-24 February)

PLEASE promote WiM to your choir members! Visit the Facebook event, encourage previous WiMmers to have a PFT about it, and contact Jenni for more information ([wim2008@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:wim2008@hotmail.co.uk)) if you need it.

You can sign-up online on the Rev website – Jenni encouraged everyone to do this as soon as possible – signing up to the Facebook event alone isn't enough!

Jenni also handed out brochures to each National Rep to give to their choir members to give them more information about WiM.

Hannah and Jenni have been to visit the WiM venue (thanks to Phil Thew for finding it!), and informed everyone that it is a lovely venue, with good amenities and a nice atmosphere.

## **7. Regional Weekends Away 2007**

Hannah asked for feedback on the three Regional Weekends Away.

Cambridge: weren't sure what was happening beforehand, perhaps a sign on the door or a phone number to call beforehand would've helped.

Keele: a weekend was too long, especially as the weekend was "at home".

Unfortunately a lot of people were already booked for that weekend by the time the dates were released.

Edinburgh: felt that the weekend needed to be organised earlier next year

Hannah added that the staff changeover in June perhaps leads to problems because if possible dates for the weekends were picked before the changeover, the new staff may not necessarily be available then.

## **8. Revelation's 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

Revelation is 15 this year!! ☺

Hannah explained that 15 (rather than 20) would be a good milestone to celebrate as Revelation choirs change so quickly and members come and go (typical members spending 3-4 years at university).

A discussion was held to try to decide on the best time of year and location to have a 15<sup>th</sup> birthday party, and also the type of event it could be (fancy dinner and entertainment, a sleepover event...?) and how much it should cost. Everyone agreed that it shouldn't be too close to exam time, but not too far into the holidays, and that the location should be central (but not associated to any one Rev in particular so that the responsibility doesn't fall on them). Acceptable costs (assuming a dinner-and-entertainment do) ranged from £50 (including transport) to £20, with the suggestion of tiered pricing for those who did not wish to attend the meal but go to the party, etc.

Everyone eventually agreed on a provisional date of Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July in York. Amara kindly offered to look round for possible venues.

Hannah wants a team of people to organise the event, and will email all National Reps to ask them to spread the word to their choirs for volunteers to do a variety of positions including Researchers, organising venue decoration, entertainment, an administrator to handle ticket sales/budgeting etc, organising catering etc. Jobshares are possible!!

#### **9. A.O.B.**

Stephen handed round a cassette of the very first WiM concert, back in 1994 in London for everyone to marvel at! 😊

#### **10. Next forum arrangement**

The next Forum will be on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April in Cambridge. This Forum will be Changeover Forum, where National Reps from old and new committees will be welcomed!

#### **11. Thank you and close**