



Compiled and edited by Simon Rawlings

From the Chairman's desk

This last year has been hard on everyone. Unable to see friends and family, unable to travel, it's made us all reflect on what we truly value. For the Federation Committee it's been challenging, but we have been able to hold meetings online (although we miss the social aspect of meetings at the Brunswick) and to maintain contact with societies. And a small compensation for not being able to meet physically was that, with no need to travel, more societies were able to be represented at the AGM when it too was held online. We enjoyed seeing so many of you then, albeit remotely.

For individual societies, though, there have been few compensations. The *raison d'être* for most societies is the regular meeting, not only to hear music but to socialise. A few societies have managed to resume meetings but for most the year since March has been devoid of activity. My own society managed to hold one meeting in the autumn before more rigorous restrictions made further meetings impracticable if not impossible. But with members socially distanced and wearing masks, and with no refreshment interval, it could not have been said to be a great event. Your Committee are aware, of course, of the difficulties, particularly regarding affiliation and PRS/PPL fees when no meetings are taking place and some allowance can be made in this respect.

An early casualty of the first lockdown was the Music Weekend scheduled for April in Ilkley. Initially rescheduled for the autumn it is now planned for the end of March with the programme as originally arranged. It remains to be seen whether restrictions are relaxed sufficiently for it to go ahead then but we will endeavour to update you on this as soon as we have definite information.

I wish you the very best New Year, with health and happiness, and look forward to seeing at least some of you in person sometime in 2021.

Allan Child FRMS Chairman

The 2020 AGM

Like almost every other activity during 2020, this year's AGM was conducted from the comfort of our own homes. This was made possible through the wonders of Zoom technology. One of the advantages of

meeting in this way is that it opened the AGM to many who may not otherwise have been able to attend. In the event, we had twenty attendees representing nineteen different societies from across the country as a whole, from Somerset to Yorkshire.

Image courtesy of George Steele



It was really nice for me to put so many faces to names, albeit remotely, and the meeting had a relaxed and interactive feel that prompted some interesting discussion.

One of our main causes for concern at present is the fact that many societies have found themselves under considerable strain, given the elderly profile of much of our membership. Meetings have had to be suspended and the future looks uncertain for many. Some societies have lost their venue and many have been deterred by the new and more stringent health and safety regulations that now have to be met.

However, what has been deeply impressive is the creative and innovative solutions that many societies have found in order to keep some semblance of normality. Many have issued playlists for specific programmes which have been followed by discussions conducted either through Zoom or email. One society has even presented programmes on its local radio station. I think we have all found new ways of working, forced upon us initially through necessity, but giving us many practices that will continue whenever the new world of normality emerges. This will certainly be true for the FRMS committee.

We are all looking forward to next year's AGM in Leicester and the companionship that that event will provide with presentations, dinner and musical entertainment. However, we must also not lose the benefits that we have noticed this year from different ways of working. Here's to the next AGM!

Adele Wills FRMS Secretary

Tony Baines

We regret to announce the death recently of Tony Baines, a Vice-president of the FRMS.

Tony was a teacher and later a headmaster in and around Birmingham until taking early retirement in 1992. In 1974 he joined the former Shirley RMS, and before long the society was exchanging presenters with the society in his native Stoke on Trent. He also enjoyed exchange visits with societies in an area extending from Stafford to Tewkesbury. After retirement, Tony returned to Stoke and soon found himself secretary of the local society. In 2002, at a time of some upheaval within the FRMS, he was persuaded to join the Committee as Secretary and he helped to put the Federation on the sound footing it has today before handing over the reins to Jim Bostwick in 2011. After a sojourn in the West Country, he returned to Staffordshire where he was soon involved in Stafford RMS. Beyond music, Tony had an interest in railways stretching back to his youthful days as a trainspotter - an interest shared with our late Vice-chairman, Roger Apps, and our current Chairman.

We extend our sincere condolences to his wife, Sheila, and his extended family.

Society News...



Another Innovative Solution ...

Putney Music Founded in 1950

As we all know, the current pandemic has had a very adverse effect on recorded music societies across the country, many of whom have not been able to meet since March 2020. However, necessity has certainly proved to be the mother of invention and we saw this in the last newsletter with Bradford-on-Avon's productive liaison with West Wilts radio station.

We have recently heard of another society – Putney Music – who have also found an innovative way of keeping in touch with their members. Rather than cancel an interesting and varied programme of speakers, the society has started to record its interviews on Zoom and then edit in the musical excerpts to create a complete video. The video is then uploaded to Vimeo for all to view. Each event is accessible via a link on the society's website and there are currently four available. This approach has not only allowed members to continue to enjoy a monthly talk, but it has also opened up the society's activities to a much wider audience and there have been viewers from across the world.

If you are interested in knowing more about this enterprise, please get in touch with the FRMS Secretary by email secretary@thefrms.co.uk and you will be put in touch with the Chairman of Putney Music.

Further news stories from other societies are available on our website: www.thefrms.co.uk



A reminder from the Treasurer

I am at present involved in the composition of a number of major works scheduled for both performance and recording over the next five years or so, a process which makes unexpected interruption unwelcome. Under the circumstances, should societies need to contact me please email and **not** telephone unless the matter is extremely urgent. I will reply as soon as possible. paul.godfrey@thefrms.co.uk

Paul Corfield Godfrey FRMS Treasurer

The current FRMS Officers and Committee

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Distribution of Newsletters

If you are now willing to receive future newsletters electronically instead of hard copies, and have not already notified us of this, please contact: simon.rawlings@thefrms.co.uk

The next newsletter is planned for September 2021. Please send any society news or articles in good time.

Current and past Newsletters can be downloaded at: www.thefrms.co.uk