

Autumn term 2010



Registered Charity no.
283789

Friends of Southampton Youth Orchestras Newsletter

WELCOME TO EVERYONE FROM THE FRIENDS

As that September tang starts to be felt in the air, once again it's a warm welcome to all players and parents new and old. And the themes of this autumn newsletter are equally about looking back, looking forward, and—most of all—getting involved....

FSYO chairman Sally Boxall has written: *"Some of you will just be beginning your musical journey in Purcell or Finzi. We hope you have a great time learning to play with a conductor for the first time. Others of you may be moving up into a higher ensemble, which will bring new challenges as well as more excitements. Still others may be staying in the same group, but perhaps moving up a part or becoming a section leader. Whatever stage you are at, though, the musical journey through the Southampton Youth Orchestras will be one of the most worthwhile things you do."*

REHEARSALS

Everyone's time is valuable—including yours, your friends in your section, and everyone else in the orchestra. Make sure you are at rehearsal, set up, seated, tuned and ready to play at the start time—not 10 or 20 minutes later! If you can't avoid being delayed, or you have to miss a rehearsal altogether, do please let your conductor know beforehand.

If this is your first experience in an orchestra, you (and your parents) may not realise that behind every rehearsal and every concert are a team of parent-helpers. Someone (or probably several someones) drove the instrument van, set out the chairs, bought the squash and biccies, sold the tickets for the next concert, and cleared up at the end. Need we say more? It doesn't need to be every week, but it's always great to have extra pairs of hands.

Have a good term!

GETTING THERE

Do you drive to rehearsal, or back? Do you have extra space on your car? Not all families may have their own transport. And anyone with more than one child knows the challenge of having to be in (say) Shirley and Swaything at the same time!

So if you have a **spare seat in your car**, please consider if you could **share it** on an occasional or regular basis. It could make all the difference. Please talk to other parents at rehearsal, or ask the musical director to make an announcement.

Allison Thomas has a daughter in SYCS. She joined the FSYO Committee at the 2009 AGM. Allison explains here about the wide range of things that the Committee does behind the scenes to keep our orchestras (and their MDs) running smoothly. The message—please never take it all for granted!

"I have nearly completed my first year on the Friends Committee. It has been enjoyable and a little scary as I have never been on a committee and I'm sure you know as adults we don't like to volunteer for the unknown.

It has been a real eye opener to hear the issues that have been discussed and decided on mine and my daughter's behalf. Most of you, I think, would be surprised at how much money is generated by the committee. I don't think that I even considered who pays for the hire of concert halls, books them, subsidises trips, pays for photocopies of letters and even buys instruments. What about who thinks about applying for grants, maintains the website, music libraries, invites local dignitaries to support concerts, publicity, ushers, raffles and be the bridge between us all and Southampton Music Services. Members even provide and serve the occasional tea to generate funds for our children.

I joined as I'm happy to pour drinks and sell raffle tickets. This year, as I will do another year on the committee, I may contribute more.

What about you? You may not realise how much of a contribution you have already made by buying tickets to concerts and raffles and providing raffle prizes.

Joining the committee doesn't mean that you sign your life away. If you can't make a meeting it's fine. You can do a little or a lot. It's really only the members who hold official titles that work extra hard. Mostly it's about getting more ideas to the table. I know from how many parents helped me and Alison last year at SYS that help is always there when we need it but can you commit to joining the committee? This year Alison is the only member at SYS and I'm the only one at SYCS. It would be great to have more representatives at the meetings.

Parents will soon have meetings at their new orchestras which will include information about the Friends. Even if you feel the committee is a step too far you can become a Friend Supporter by joining and subscribing £10 per year. At the moment less than half of us do this which is

shameful. It's easy for us to rectify this and generate a chunk of income for supporting all the ensembles. Come prepared to donate and join.

At the very least please come to the AGM to listen and meet us. You can join the Friends at this meeting too. It is at Cantell on Saturday 6th November 2010. I know a fair few of you now so I look forward to seeing you all there." - **Allison Thomas**



Committee 2009–2010

POSITION	NAME	ENSEMBLE(S)
Chair	Sally Boxall <i>sallyboxall@hotmail.com</i>	SYO
Treasurer	Richard Boardman	SYO
Vice Chair	Sue Wilkins <i>sue@wilkinsfamily.plus.com</i>	SYCS
Secretary	Claire Thompson	SYO
Membership Secretary	Claire Thompson <i>mrsct@live.co.uk</i>	SYO
SYO Transport	Peter Gosney	ex SYS
FSYO Website	Linnet Evans <i>info@fsyo.org.uk</i>	ex SYO
FSYO Music Library	Alan Hopley <i>a.p.hopley@hotmail.com.uk</i>	SYCS
Other committee members	Miyuki Archibald	SYO
	Alison Niblo	SYS
	Marianne Plater	SYS
	Allison Thomas	SYCS
	Fleurette Waldron	SYO
	Clare Wikeley	SYO

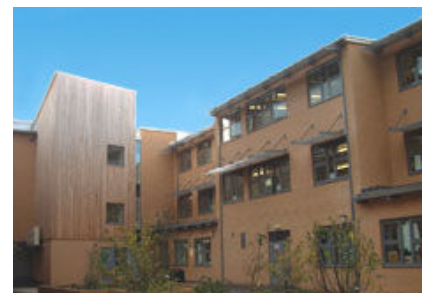
Some roles have changed mid-year. Ensemble details reflect 2010-2011 status.

Ensembles, Directors and Rehearsals 2010–2011

ENSEMBLE	DIRECTOR	VENUE	TIME
Purcell Strings	Bev Geen	Sholing Junior School	Wednesday, 4.00-5.00 pm
Finzi Strings	Vanessa Jarvis	Hollybrook Junior School	Monday, 4.15-5.15 pm
Holst String Orchestra	Zoe Hunting	Shirley Junior School	Monday, 4.00-5.00 pm
Elgar String Orchestra	Christa Porter	Sholing Junior School	Wednesday, 5:15 - 6:15 pm
Southampton Youth Sinfonietta (SYS)	Phil Batten	Cantell School	Saturday, 9:30 – 11:45 am
Southampton Youth Concert Sinfonia (SYCS)	Martin Felton (mgr. Sue Edmonds)	Regent's Park School	Saturday, 9:30am -12 noon
Southampton Youth Orchestra (SYO)	Jane Higgins	Taunton's College	Saturday. 9:30 – 12:30 pm

Friends' Annual General Meeting

The 2010 AGM will be held on **Saturday 6 November** at 10.00, at our usual venue of **Cantell School** (pictured), Violet Road, Southampton SO16 3GJ. The official business includes reports of the past year's activities and the election of the new committee to steer us through the year ahead. But it's also a forum to hear from the wider community of parents, teachers and conductors. We also invite a representative from Southampton Music Services (SMS) to share experiences and plans from 'the other side'. More details will be on the website in due course.



GIVING UP THE SATURDAY JOB

After many years of sterling service as manager of **Southampton Youth Concert Sinfonia (SYCS)**, last Easter **Joy Tricklebank** gave up the Saturday job. Subsequently, she has written a reflection on times past, present and future, exclusively for the Newsletter.



The **Southampton Youth Training Orchestra**, predecessor to SYCS, on what looks like a very grey and windy day on the Isle of Wight in 1997. Joy is on the far right, towards the back; in front of her is Musical Director **John Dover**. Photographer unknown.

"Earlier this year I decided it was time to move on from my current role as Orchestra Manager with SYCS. By the time you read this Sue Edmonds will have taken over the reins and I am sure that everything is in safe hands.

As people keep saying – I have been around a long time! During the last 20 years I have worn various hats – some official, others less so – within Southampton Youth Orchestras and the Friends. Many of you reading this will recognise the pattern, - children join the system, parent is grateful and offers to help, and gradually it takes over your life. In my case though that is only part of the story.

As a teenager, rather further back than I care to remember, I was fortunate to go to school in Leicestershire. The combination of an enthusiastic Director of Education, and a few inspirational musicians just out of the army, led to the formation of one of the first county youth orchestras. Instruments were begged and borrowed, a network of 'area schools' operated in the evenings across the county, and anyone keen enough and showing commitment was somehow fitted in. Violin and cello was usually taught in groups by specialist teachers, but for the rest of us, at least to begin with, we relied on one or two 'stars' who would often teach woodwind and brass, all at the same time (literally!) as repairing instruments long past their best, and writing parts and solos to keep everybody playing.

We were bussed in from all over the county to the Saturday orchestra. Concerts were organised with primary and secondary school groups joining in, (that really spread the word). We had top conductors working with us (Adrian Boulton and Malcolm Arnold to name but two), and every year there were residential courses in and out of Leicestershire, (sleeping on camp beds in school classrooms with sugar paper in lieu of curtains) and trips abroad where we stayed with families.

Giving something back

All of this was provided free by a very enlightened county council and, thanks to the total dedication of the staff, the lives of an awful lot of people, including me, were transformed. My parents, like many others in the late 50s, had no car to drive me around, and certainly could not have afforded to buy instruments and pay for music lessons. So when my own children moved into the local music scene I guess I was already wanting to 'put something back', albeit in a different part of the country.

Working with SYCS has always been interesting and sometimes challenging. So what have been the high points?

Trips away

With SYCS it has to be the exchanges organised by John Beswick with the two Dutch orchestras which were a fantastic experience for players and staff alike. Also some of the joint concerts with SYO and SYS in the Guildhall, when I seem to remember we joined forces to play the 1812 overture and Finlandia. Then there were the February trips to Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Devon – with students rock climbing on the moors in the morning followed by a rehearsal after lunch and a concert in the evening.

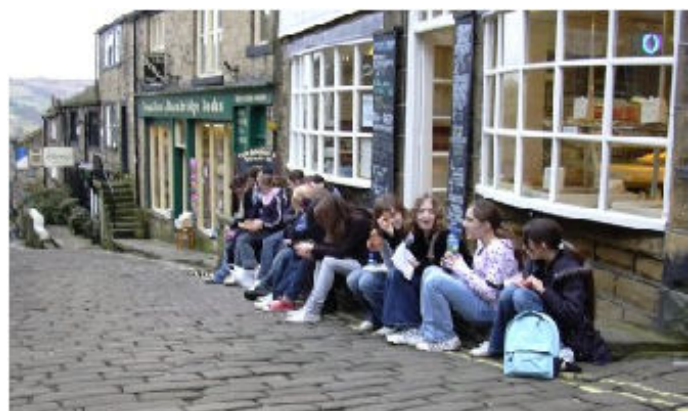
An age range of 11 to 17 presents many problems, and these trips away from home have really helped the orchestra, both musically and socially, building a great team spirit. Perhaps some of the nicest memories are of the real buzz at the rehearsals after getting home from a trip. Then you know it has made a difference.

Perhaps I should also mention some concerns though. Firstly, teenagers are pulled in so many directions, - they are encouraged to do more outside school, more sport, more activities, DoE, all demanding time and commitment. Attendance at orchestra is less regular now, making it more difficult to plan rehearsals, and in the end the standard of the whole ensemble starts to suffer. Imagine a football team without a goalkeeper...!

Secondly, although more children are learning more instruments in more schools than ever before, we are increasingly short of players – the orchestra is smaller this year [2009-2010] than I can ever remember, and we struggle to keep a balance of instruments. This will start to restrict the repertoire, the experience and then the standard that can be achieved. Do we have too many ensembles? Do students need more guidance and encouragement to join the orchestras?

And finally, - funding! I would urge all of you to do whatever you can to make sure money is still found to keep the youth orchestra movement going, and available to all who want it. Spread the word, talk to councillors and local business, help the Friends with fundraising, and encourage people to come to concerts and hear for themselves.

We have always been aware that becoming a member of SYCS requires commitment not only from the individual, but also from the rest of the family. Two and a half hours every Saturday in term time requires effort. But if you ever have any doubts I promise that the benefits of going through the youth orchestra system are long-lasting, whether it leads to a career in music, or joining the amateur music network, or perhaps nothing beyond school. The skills are still there. It's about working in a team, learning discipline and commitment, achievement – and dare I say, it's also about having fun in a very positive way! " - Joy Tricklebank



Members of the **Southampton Youth Concert Sinfonia** on probably an equally grey and windy day in Haworth, West Yorkshire



ROGUES' GALLERY

This unashamedly black-and-white picture comes from the FSYO archive.

Pete Gosney—as so often a goldmine of knowledge—was there in person, with tuba. It's Central Hall of course, the date is probably July 1979, and the occasion is one of the former SMA (Southampton Music Association) end-of-year concerts.

"In the days before each ensemble had its own pyramid concert", he continues, "the SMA ran concerts for the ensembles which took place over two nights in July.

"The format was SYO Brass ensemble for opening fanfare – Suzuki violins – Junior/Area orchestras – Youth Brass Band – interval – Southampton Symphonic Wind Band, then SYO."

Pete has identified various members of the then SYO brass section who also, as now, sat in the Youth Brass band. These included: Paul Atkinson (YBB lead euphonium), Stuart Milne (trombone), Barry Pointer (euphonium), Liz Taylor (tenor horn), Adrian Early (cornet) and Stephen Cursley (tuba).

Does anyone else remember this, or similar SMA summer concerts, either as a member of the audience, or as a player? And were we all discussing budget cuts in those (more or less) pre-Thatcher days?

ACHIEVING THE ARCHIVE

This, and many other photos, concert programmes and other 'memorabilia' are currently stored at Taunton's College. Other current and former staff and parents have similar material that they may be happy to loan or donate. Some interest has been shown in sound recordings as well. But to make the best of these fascinating resources, we really need an **archivist**.

Someone with an initial block of free time to sort label, catalogue and store would be ideal. It could be a good opportunity for someone on a gap year or waiting for job offers. If this appeals, please contact Sally Boxall or Alan Hobley—details on page 2.

DOING THE SUMS

Finally in this long list of calls for help, the Committee's Treasurer, Richard Boardman will be stepping down after 2 years in this role.

Richard would like to reassure anyone who might be interested that the job requires only very basic skills in keeping the books up to date, occasional trips to the bank, and telling the committee how much it's got to spend each month. For further information, Richard can be contacted by email via the Friends: info@fsyo.org.uk

AD LIBITUM

The Awards scheme, through which SMS has given financial support to some of the City's most talented young players is now being wound up. With shrinking resources and, possibly, a shrinking population of serious young musicians, how do we go forward? You may like to let your views be known at the AGM on 6 November.

AD CAPO AL FINE (OR THE LAST BARK)

This newsletter comes out near the start of the new school and college year—for a very good reason. In the great tradition, I originally took on the editor's seat from Jane Warren on a caretaker basis. That was three years

ago—and my daughter, having graduated from SYO about the same time, is due to graduate from university next year! The newsletter, and its readership, warrant someone who can have their finger fully on the pulse, with a son or daughter currently playing in one of the orchestras. I will also appreciate having more time to work on the technical aspects of the website.

While the website is the main source of current news and reference material, the Newsletter continues to play a fine complementary role. We know that it remains a valued publication for many readers. It may be more practicable to scale it down now to a single issue a year.

If you are interested in taking over the tenancy of the Newshound kennel, please get in touch (without obligation) via info@fsyo.org.uk. You just need a PC, some fairly basic software, and of course enjoy writing and chatting to people. I will be pleased to help with the handover and give any necessary support to keep the show on the road.

*Whether or not someone is able to volunteer their time, this will be the last edition put together by myself. It's been fun! **Woof! Woof! Newshound, aka Linnet Evans***

