



Compiled by Simon Rawlings, FRMS committee member

2019 AGM – Weston-super-Mare – 2nd November 2019

It's hard to believe that nearly a year has passed since my inauguration as Secretary. And even harder to believe that we are only weeks away from my first AGM. Now the work really starts!

Local Secretaries should have received information packs and I hope that we will see many Societies represented. The AGM is much more than just a business meeting and I want to take this opportunity to tell you about this.

The AGM will, for the first time, take place in Weston-super-Mare which also coincides with the 40th anniversary celebrations for the local society. I am extremely grateful for the support of the Weston committee who have worked tirelessly to piece together every detail to ensure that we have a successful event.



We will be based in the historic setting of The Winter Gardens, a neo-Georgian pavilion which opened in 1927 for the enjoyment of tourists visiting the seaside resort. The pavilion's heyday was during the 1950s and 1960s when many famous acts performed there, but, sadly, it went into a period of decline during the 1980s and 1990s. However, we will experience the benefits of an extensive refurbishment in 2015 that has not only preserved many of the original 1920s features, but has added a new restaurant and bistro. And the sea views are magnificent!

The formal business of the AGM will take place in the afternoon and will be followed by a presentation given by two very popular and engaging speakers: David Threasher and Geraint Lewis. And you are really in for a treat here! I recently had the privilege of attending a talk given by Geraint at a meeting of the Weston Society – on Benjamin Britten and Aldeburgh – and it was truly inspirational. Geraint is a composer and academic and he will be talking about his time working for Nimbus records in conversation with David Threasher, sub-editor of Gramophone Magazine.

We have the delights of a meal in the Winter Gardens restaurant in the evening which will be followed by a live recital by the Abbey Quartet from Glastonbury (named in honour of Glastonbury's famous Abbey). The four performers are all members of the Mid-Somerset Orchestra, including Hywel Jenkins who is leader of the orchestra. We are perhaps not well-served for orchestras in the West Country, but I'm sure that you will not be disappointed with what we are offering!

The Winter Gardens is not able to provide overnight accommodation for the event, but we have arranged a very good deal with a local hotel – The Lauriston – which is only a 5-minute walk away. We have negotiated an excellent rate of £49 bed and breakfast for up to two people in a room for the evening of the AGM, which increases to a reasonable £69 for additional evenings. I would urge you to consider staying for a few days. You not only have the delights of Weston-super-Mare to explore, but local attractions such as Wells Cathedral, Cheddar caves and Glastonbury Tor and Abbey, to name but a few.



NB The picture above shows the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, not our hotel accommodation!

This should give you a small taste of what we have in store for November. I hope to see as many of you as possible in Weston-super-Mare – please make sure that you come and introduce yourself. Your Secretary will have further information and booking forms, but I am equally happy for anyone to contact me directly: secretary@thefrms.co.uk

See you at the seaside!

Adele Wills FRMS Secretary

GUIDANCE & REFERENCE FOR PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING (PAT)



“Portable appliance testing (PAT) is the term used to describe the examination of electrical appliances and equipment to ensure they are safe to use. Most electrical safety defects can be found by visual examination but some types of defect can only be found by testing. However, it is essential to understand that visual examination is an essential part of the process because some types of electrical safety defect can't be detected by testing alone”.

The above is a quote from the HSE website regarding electrical safety in the work place.

Definition of ‘Portable Appliances’- This is generally electrical equipment which is plugged into a mains supply and usually movable, such as kettles, hot water urns, projectors, power supply for Laptops and sound equipment, including mains connecting leads, extension leads and adaptors. There are many other electrical items considered as ‘Portable Appliances’. However, we have only listed a few here that are more likely to be owned by affiliates. Certain classes of portable appliances and equipment may not need a formal test. [Refer to HSE links provided for more information].

What is the legal position? Electrical equipment must be maintained if it can cause danger, but the ‘Electricity at Work Regulations 1989’ does not say how this should be done or how often! You should decide the level of maintenance needed according to the risk of an item becoming faulty, how often it is used and consideration as to the construction of the equipment in question. It is anticipated that use of electrical equipment by affiliates would normally take place in what would be regarded as a ‘low-risk’ environment. Although the activities of affiliates are unlikely to be regarded as occurring ‘in the work place’, there would still be a general ‘*duty of care*’ implication, which is why we are providing this guidance and why the FRMS offer Public Liability insurance for affiliates. Electrical appliances and equipment provided by the venue should be the responsibility of that venue, although affiliates should still conduct basic visual checks when using such equipment and report any defects. Many venues require electrical equipment brought in and used on their premises to be portable appliance tested. This needs to be considered when booking guest speakers using their own equipment!

Who can carry out visual checks? The HSE state the following – *“To carry out a visual inspection you don’t need to be an electrician, but you do need to know what to look for and you must also have sufficient knowledge to avoid danger to yourself and others”.* The person carrying out this task could either be the usual operator of the equipment or another delegated person. Specific advice as to what should be checked and what to look for is available from the HSE links provided.

Who can conduct PAT checks? The HSE state: *“A portable appliance test does not need to be carried out by an electrician, but greater knowledge and experience is needed than for inspection alone, and the person performing the test must have the right equipment for the task. They should know how to use the test equipment and how to interpret the results”.* Many electrical contractors provide this service, although there are also a few businesses and individuals offering portable appliance testing only. A passed (or failed) label should be attached to the item tested by the person conducting that test.

As a result of contacting our insurance brokers, advice from HSE publications and discussions within the FRMS, affiliates are encouraged to:

1. Refer to the HSE guidance and conduct a risk assessment. Consider the circumstances under which you operate and the equipment in use, along with the following advice;
2. Carry out basic visual inspection of all portable electrical equipment and arrange for any defects to be corrected;
3. Arrange portable appliance testing for all relevant equipment, if not previously carried out;
4. Maintain a copy of PAT results supplied by the service provider, as labels can come off;
5. Request users to report any defects found;
6. Ensure equipment is properly maintained, visually inspected and safely stored when not in use;
7. Make sure any equipment found defective whether by user check, visual inspection or failed test, is not permitted to be used until repaired and passed a portable appliance test. This advice would also apply to equipment provided by a third party, such as the venue, member or guest;
8. Plan periodic PAT for owned and on loan items. For example - 3 YEARS for projectors, sound equipment and associated items. ANNUALLY for kettles and hot water urns. (Testing intervals may vary as a result of the risk assessment and the above is a general guide only);
9. Consider all health & safety matters during the course of activities;
10. Contact the FRMS with any concerns or questions: secretary@thefrms.co.uk

Reference:

Health & Safety Executive –

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg236.pdf

www.hse.gov.uk/electricity/faq-portable-appliance-testing.htm

DOWNLOAD AND STREAMING SERVICES

The FRMS has been asked by a number of societies to provide guidance on the use of download and streaming services, and the committee spent some time at their meeting recently discussing the various aspects of the matter. This is a field where practices are changing almost on a monthly basis, and definitive guidance is perhaps consequently hard to provide; but here goes.

In the first place there is the issue of downloaded files, often of complete CDs, on platforms such as YouTube but also many other forums, some of which charge for their services and some of which are free. Now it is a simple fact that if a buyer of a CD puts his or her purchase out on one of these platforms for others to listen to, download or record, this is a breach of copyright and illegal. Some record companies permit YouTube to license performances for issue on their site, either for publicity purposes or because they are not proposing to issue the recordings commercially; but it is practically impossible to identify these, if only because fake statements that a recording has been so licensed are so easy to make. The result of this is simply that the performers, the record company and (if the music is still in copyright) the composer get paid absolutely nothing for the use of their work. In one such instance recently a comment was posted on the site: *"thanks for performing, recording and uploading it; a labour of love and much appreciated"*. The response from the producer clarifies the position admirably: "I'm not sure if your thanks are directed purely at the uploader but if they are also directed at the pianist, the recording engineer and the owner of the recording company, all of whom did a little work too, then I thank you for your encouragement, also on behalf of the others involved. I wish I could thank you for supporting the enterprise by buying the discs (readily obtainable on Amazon and other places, also as track-by-track downloads if you don't want everything) but presumably you didn't buy them. I wonder if it occurs to those who get their music via unauthorized uploads of copyright material, that if you bought the discs, the recording company would be better placed to issue other similar material."

As the aggrieved producer commented, there are also downloads available to purchase from Amazon and other online retailers, which can include the facility to choose individual tracks if the buyer is not interested in the other items on the disc. These *are* perfectly legal (indeed they are the commonest means of sale now in the field of pop music) and full royalties are paid to everybody involved. But sometimes there is a compromise in quality as compared with the commercially released CDs, which may not be so noticeable in pop music but can be quite serious in complicated 'classical' scores. Some companies therefore advertise high-resolution downloads, which can cost more – indeed, sometimes more than the physical CDs themselves – while at the same time the provision of background information from the CD booklets can be very patchy. (Of course, some record

companies shoot themselves in the foot here by failing to provide booklet notes even with their commercial releases). Similarly there can be no objections to the purchaser of a CD transferring individual tracks to a CD-ROM or something similar for the purposes of convenience when playing a track either on their own equipment or as part of a public recital – provided that the royalties due to the performer have been paid, and the venue or organisation holds a suitable license from PRS/PPL.

Perhaps most tricky of all are the streaming services, some free (that is, financed by advertising) and some charging monthly or annual subscriptions, of which the first example was Spotify but which has now been joined by a number of rivals. Here, after some protest, the organisations concerned agreed to make a royalty payment to the performers, composers where appropriate, and the record companies; but the amounts involved are relatively miniscule compared to those received from sales of physical products (CDs, DVDs, LPs or whatever) or purchased downloads. Listening to classical music on a site which carries adverts can be a horrendous experience, as the adverts will frequently be inserted between tracks in a totally random fashion which can (for example) jar horribly between movements of a symphony or a concerto, or even worse in the course of an opera. And the quality of the sound often is quite unsatisfactory, as the mp3 format removes much of the subtlety which is such an essential part of classical music; Spotify and others do provide higher resolution services without advertising, but charge heavily for the service. And then of course the payment of royalties to the performers etc is no better; and some high-profile names refuse in consequence to allow their recordings to appear on such platforms altogether.

In response to this it has been objected that the large record companies don't mind the loss of revenue, since the availability of these recordings acts as valuable publicity to promote the consequent sales of their CDs. Well, we take leave to doubt that proposition, the more so since there are a number of applications available on the internet which enable listeners to simply copy the files onto their own computers without making any payment whatsoever (some of these, we are told, are highly unreliable, simply ceasing to work after a given period of time). But even so it is not really the large record companies who are worst affected. Many of the new releases which are most welcome are of music rescued from undeserved obscurity by various small and small-ish producers, most of whom operate on a shoestring budget and will often release a CD with no expectation of immediate profit. If potential purchasers find that they can obtain the same recordings (from legal or illegal sources) for minimal or no payment, then these companies will simply find that they are no longer able to fund new recordings at all. The views of the record companies themselves vary on this issue; BIS, for example, issue all their recordings on Spotify, while

Hyperion refuse to make any tracks available. Some others, such as Chandos, make available only certain CDs, mainly those that are no longer commercially for sale; some, like Supraphon, allow Spotify to place certain tracks on their site but then delete others (while continuing to list them) effectively forcing those interested to buy the CD. Even so one has to bear in mind that it is the artists and composers who are the most short-changed by these arrangements, more seriously so than the record companies; and the majority of those, certainly in the classical field, are financially damaged thereby.

It is not as if we are seriously short of a huge range of classical music available on CD, to an extent that would have exceeded our wildest dreams twenty or thirty years ago. It should be possible to present a programme of recorded music without the need to explore the murky underworld of online pirated recordings (and there are plenty of those being offered

for sale on CD anyway)! Regarding streaming services, these will have a place where commercial CDs have been deleted (let alone some non-copyright sites which offer variable quality transcripts of BBC and live recordings or rare material) but we would not expect societies to present anything which would infringe the terms of their PRS/PPL licenses, whether obtained through the FRMS or from the venues themselves.

Paul Corfield Godfrey FRMS Treasurer

AND FINALLY FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I hope you approve of this new-style Newsletter! Much as we may regret the demise of the *Bulletin* in its final glossy format, the practicalities of production and of attracting sufficient advertising to offset production costs meant that the retirement of the editor, Paul Astell, was an opportune moment to consider the future format of communication between the Federation and its affiliated societies. The *Bulletin* was supplemented with occasional newsletters – the most recent issue was in January this year – and this Newsletter is a development of that format. We are grateful to Simon Rawlings, a recent recruit to the Committee, for taking on the collation and production of the Newsletter, and wish him success in this challenging task.

In the issue of the newsletter which I referred to, there were details of the Yorkshire and Northwest Region's Ilkley Music Weekend, which duly took place in April and was enjoyed by participants from the region and beyond. Sadly, the Regional committee have decided to disband, principally because of a lack of new members to take on necessary tasks, and it looked very much as if in 2020 there would be no events in the FRMS calendar apart from the AGM. However, I am pleased to report that the FRMS committee have decided that the event is too valuable to lose, and **the Ilkley Music Weekend will go ahead in 2020 under the auspices of the Federation**. The event runs from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, 3rd to 5th April and we already have a full programme of presentations. The venue is the Craiglands Hotel, a traditional hotel near to the town centre. Ilkley is easily accessible both by public transport and by car, and there are many attractions in the area for anyone planning to extend their stay. Full details are being circulated to societies and individuals but for more information please don't hesitate to contact: Adele Wills secretary@thefrms.co.uk

Meanwhile, I hope that as many societies as possible will be represented, whether in person or by proxy, at the 2019 AGM taking place in Weston-super-Mare on 2nd November and I look forward to meeting members there.

Allan Childs FRMS Chairman

The next newsletter is planned for January 2020. Please send any society news or articles to the FRMS Secretary

FRMS Sept. 2019 E & OE

All members should be encouraged to read newsletters and visit our website – www.frms.co.uk