



Newsletter

No.22 September 2020



Compiled by Simon Rawlings FRMS committee member

From the Chairman's desk

September. The time of year when many of our societies expect to re-start their activities after a summer break. This year, spring had barely started when the summer break was thrust upon us and I fear that for some societies it may continue for a while yet – and sadly a few societies have decided to close altogether. Of course, the whole of the music world has been badly affected by the coronavirus pandemic with live music almost non-existent for months, threatening the livelihood of musicians and the survival of orchestras, choirs and many other ensembles.

Recorded music has not, initially at any rate, fared too badly with regular new releases from the record companies; one suspects, though, that these have been of recordings already 'in the can' and that there may be fewer new recordings released in future. Record companies, though, have considerable back catalogues to call upon, and in the midst of lockdown it was some compensation for the loss of live music when the BBC took a leaf out of the record companies' book to raid their own 'back catalogue' of noteworthy performances from both the Proms and the Edinburgh Festival.

That got me thinking about our own 'back catalogues' – programmes from past years. Are any of your society's programmes especially memorable or, on the other hand, any that might be best forgotten? Did any particular programme present a familiar composer in a new light or prompt you to investigate one you'd never heard of? They may serve to remind us how valuable a part of our lives a Recorded Music Society can be. There are hopeful signs that we may be able to resume meetings before too long and be able once more to share our enjoyment with others. Don't let us allow that opportunity, when it comes, to slip away.

Tony Pook

Tony Pook, who died in April this year, was for many years a member of York RMS and also a former Chairman of the Yorkshire Regional Group (as it was known in his time). He was closely involved in organising the Yorkshire Group weekends, firstly in Scarborough but latterly at Ilkley, and even produced the programme leaflets himself – a task he continued to undertake after standing down from the regional committee. One of his last tasks for the Federation was to produce programme leaflets for the Ilkley weekend (which has yet to take place).

For a number of years Tony was a member of the FRMS national committee and took on the role of Bulletin Distribution Manager. He was also involved in the efforts some years ago to ensure that the FRMS remained 'on track' at a time when the good

governance of the then committee was being called into question.

In recent years Tony was in poor health, which restricted his mobility, but he continued as far as was possible to present programmes to societies. This was an activity which he enjoyed and, as he was keen to encourage others, he produced for the FRMS a leaflet on presenting programmes; this is still available and can be found via a link on the FRMS website.

We subsequently heard that Tony's wife, Muriel, died shortly after Tony and we extend our sympathy to the members of his family.

John Davies

It is with sadness that we have to report the death in May this year, at the age of 83, of John Davies, one of the Federation's vice-presidents and a former Chairman of the Federation.

John was an engineer by profession and a lecturer in the subject at a tertiary college, but music was always his antidote to the trials of life. A member of the South Cheshire RMS (sadly no longer in existence), he joined the Federation committee as Vice-Chairman in 2001, becoming Chairman the following year. This was at a time when there were tensions within the Federation but John was able to 'steady the ship' and provided excellent leadership for the next few years before handing over the reins to the late Colin Dancer in 2011.

For the last few years of his chairmanship John also acted as deputy to the Federation's then webmaster, George Steele. To keep in practice, he ran a sub-website for the nine associates in his immediate area (Stoke, Stone, S Cheshire, etc and several U3A groups). He operated it very efficiently and kept them all up to date with their own information as well as general FRMS information.

John will be remembered with gratitude and affection by many people in the Federation and beyond. We extend our sympathy to his wife, Rita, and members of his family.

Allan Child FRMS Chairman

Covid-19 - Advice on Resumption of Meetings

As lockdown restrictions are eased and various types of venues are able to open again, societies may be looking at the possibilities of resuming meetings. However, the view of the FRMS committee is that whilst we are keen to see a resumption of society activities caution is necessary when considering such a move.

At the time of writing (late July) the official advice is that social distancing of "1 metre plus" should be observed. This is open to interpretation but may be seen as meaning that the recommended 2 metre distance may be reduced to 1 metre provided additional precautions (the "plus") are taken, such as wearing face coverings.

There are, though, other factors to take into consideration. A fair proportion of the members of our affiliates may be considered to be "at risk" and within that category will be some who are shielding. The actual numbers will vary between societies but there may well be societies where most of the members would be unable, or reluctant, to attend because they are at risk.

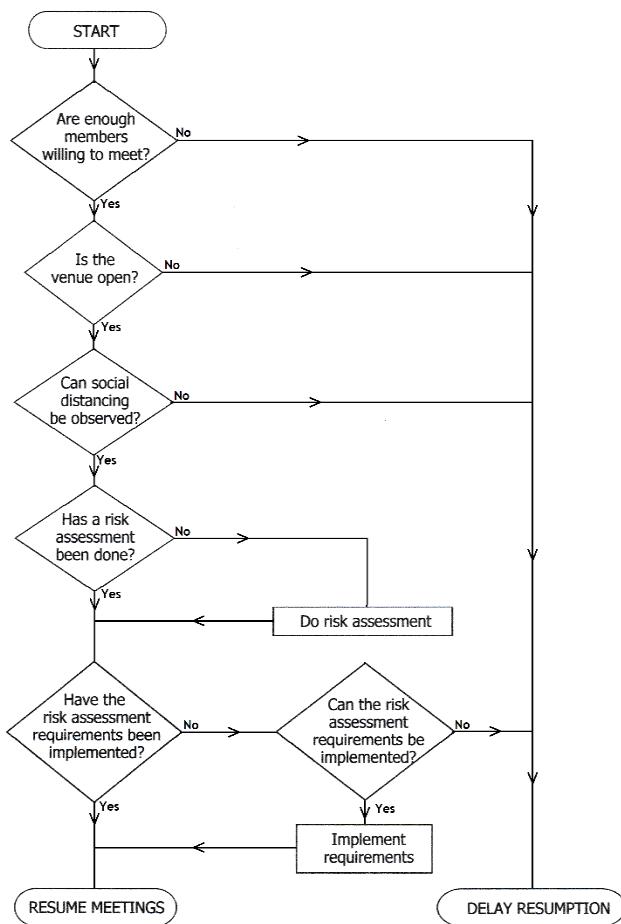
But even with the potential for full attendance problems may arise with the use of the venue. Many of our societies meet on church premises; churches are now able to open but are subject to strict requirements not only on social distancing but on maintaining a clean and safe environment - a rigorous risk assessment process must be completed before opening and, once open, activities within the building are restricted. Restrictions also apply to any other users of the building, and the church may require users also to complete the risk assessment process. Similar rules will apply to other communal venues such as village halls and social clubs.

Particular points which may emerge in following the requirements include, but are not limited to: (i) hand sanitisers need to be freely available; (ii) items such as door handles and light switches should be touched a little as possible - this can include the society's equipment; (iii) if printed handouts such as programme notes are used individual members should retain their copies and take them home for disposal; (iv) presenters should use amplification if anything louder than their normal speaking voice needs to be heard; (v) interval refreshments may not be practicable unless members bring their own.

To summarise, societies should consider

1. How many members are able or willing to attend at present?
2. Can social distancing be observed?
3. Can we meet the other requirements of government regulations?
4. Can we meet any further requirements of the venue?

The following flow chart might be of use for coming to a decision.



STOP PRESS: As this newsletter goes to press the Government has announced that from Monday 14th September social gatherings will be restricted to a maximum of six people. Details are not yet to hand but clearly this will affect the advice to societies. We recommend that you check the latest Government advice online using the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>



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 e-mail and **not** telephone unless the matter is extremely urgent. I will reply as soon as possible. Thank you.

paul.godfrey@thefrms.co.uk

Paul Corfield Godfrey FRMS Treasurer

FRMS MUSIC WEEKEND AT ILKLEY

Rescheduled to March 2021



**Best Western Craiglands Hotel
Cowpasture Road
Ilkley LS29 8RG
01943 430001
sales@craiglands.co.uk**

As it now seems likely that social distancing rules will still be in place in October, a further postponement has been arranged. **It is now intended that the event will take place from 26th to 28th March 2021.**

Some adjustment to the programme may be necessary but at the time of writing we hope that all the original presenters and recitalists will be able to be with us.

All bookings and payments have been transferred to the new date, and as bookings were made directly with the hotel, we have asked the hotel to notify participants individually. This may take a little while, so if you know of anyone who may be wondering what the situation is please feel free to make them aware of this.

The hotel has now reopened and can be contacted by email or phone – see above for contact details.

It may be possible to accept additional bookings for the rescheduled dates. If you are interested please email chairman@thefrms.co.uk for further information.



Keep an eye on our website for further updates regarding Ilkley along with other useful information – www.thefrms.co.uk



2020

It will come as no surprise to learn that this year's AGM is going to be rather different to previous AGMs. To be honest, most of 2020 has been different to any other year that we have ever known, so why should the AGM be exempt?!

Although we were looking forward to visiting Leicester this year, the restrictions on public meetings and performances of live music mean that we have had to postpone this event until November 2021. Instead, this year's AGM will be conducted online using a videoconferencing application called Zoom. Some of you may have used this for work or as a way of keeping in touch with relatives, and the Federation committee has already started using it routinely for regular meetings.

The Zoom technology will allow everyone who has an internet connection to be involved and it really is very easy to use. **It costs nothing and all you do is submit an email to me – using the form in the AGM invitation letter – and our Webmaster will then ensure that you are sent an electronic invitation.** The Zoom display looks very much like the picture you can see here.



I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us – this year, from the comfort of your own home. In addition, joining the Federation committee has never been easier as all our meetings will now be held in this way. There are three vacancies on the committee, so please do think seriously about joining us.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on **7th November at 2pm.**

Adele Wills FRMS Secretary

A very special ***Thank you!***

Mick Birchall

At this year's AGM we shall be bidding farewell to Mick Birchall who has decided to step down from the Committee. Mick was first elected in 2001 and is the longest-serving member of the present Committee. He was Vice-Chairman for a time but his greatest contribution to the Federation has been his many years of service as minutes secretary, keeping scrupulously accurate records of the Federation's business.

Mick's involvement with the FRMS has not been limited to the national Committee, however. He is Secretary of Hinckley RMS, a member of Northampton RMS and, until its recent closure, was a member of Spalding Music Club. And members of societies in central England will remember many regional music days which he not only helped to organise but was the caterer!

At the time of writing we are arranging the presentation of a gift in appreciation of his service and hope to report on that in a future issue. For now, though, we express our most grateful thanks and good wishes to Mick on his 'retirement'.

Society News...

Bradford-on-Avon RMS takes to the airwaves



While coronavirus has put our normal group meetings on hold for the foreseeable future, members of the Bradford-on-Avon RMS have not let this stop the music. Robin Benton, the group's Chairman, and his wife Lynne, have been asked to contribute a series of music talks for the new West Wilts Radio station. The talks take place on Sunday afternoons at 2pm and are called The Classical Music Hour. If you want to listen, the talks are available on the West Wilts Radio internet site through their 'Play Again' facility.

This is undoubtedly a fabulous way to promote local societies and Federation members might want to consider the possibility of contacting their local radio station and offering a similar service. If you are interested, please contact the Federation Secretary on secretary@thefrms.co.uk for further information.

Congratulations!

Norwich Opera Club

Celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year.

More information regarding the club available from: www.thefrms.co.uk Society weblinks page

Also

Further news stories from other societies are available on our website – click on:

New feature - stories from the societies

The current FRMS committee

Chairman

Allan Child – chairman@thefrms.co.uk

Vice Chairman

George Steele – george.steele@thefrms.co.uk

Secretary

Adele Wills – secretary@thefrms.co.uk

Treasurer

Paul Corfield Godfrey – paul.godfrey@thefrms.co.uk

Webmaster

Ron Mitchell – webmaster@thefrms.co.uk

Committee (in alphabetical order)

Mick Birchall no email

John Futter john.futter@thefrms.co.uk

Ron Mitchell ron.mitchell@thefrms.co.uk

Simon Rawlings simon.rawlings@thefrms.co.uk

Tony Sanderson tony.sanderson@thefrms.co.uk

David Wherrell david.wherrell@thefrms.co.uk

A special note for society contacts – Distribution of Newsletters

As a result of the previous offer for electronic copies – just five requests were received. So, in view of this, hard copies will continue to be provided for the time being. However, this matter will be reviewed in the future. If you are now willing to receive future newsletters electronically instead of hard copies and have not previously agreed to this, please let me know. simon.rawlings@thefrms.co.uk

It is, however, important that newsletters are made available to all your members.

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

Current and past Newsletters can be downloaded

www.thefrms.co.uk
