



The South West Early Music Forum

Minutes of virtual Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 4 September 2021 from 2.30pm via Zoom

In welcoming members to the meeting, Clare enquired if the making of a recording was acceptable; it was agreed. She remarked that the meeting was quorate (minimum of 10 including at least 3 from the committee) and suggested that we were muted, and ask questions via Chat.

1. Present Committee members: Peter Crispin, Rick Fitzsimmons, Heather Gibbard, Elizabeth Gowers, Clare Griffel, Althea Hamlyn, Marilyn Pocock, Sara Scorey, Jenny Tribe, Jonathan Tribe and 6 other members

2. Apologies were received from Keith Bennett, Venetia Caine, Wendy Carnell, Valerie Giltrow-Tyler, Sonia Jackson, Simon Pickard, Lindsey Shaw-Miller, Alison Suter, Jennifer Wood and Sue Young.

3. Chairman's report

Clare said that when we held our AGM online last year, we could not have anticipated that 12 months later we would still be awaiting the return of face-to-face events. She thanked all members for their loyalty, for renewing memberships and supporting online events through the difficult period.

"The monthly Zoom-based events provided a wide variety of talks and workshops, including David Allinson's session in March which attracted over 100 people from as far away as Italy, Philippa Waite's session in June which encouraged us to try out dance steps in the privacy of our own homes, and interesting talks by our own members Bruce Saunders, Jacqui Robertson-Wade and Michael Williamson, as well as Marilyn Pocock's interview with talented viol-maker Agnieszka Nalazek. And I enjoyed leading our practical sessions of Christmas music (in January!) and Bach Passion chorales for Easter.

We also continued our sponsorship of the Bristol Early Music festival, providing Zoom support for the very successful weekend of online activities.

One of the positive aspects of having to operate like this is that members from across our large region have been able to come together in a way that geography might make difficult for face-to-face events. And we have been joined by colleagues from other Fora, just as we have joined their events.

However, hopefully this period is now coming to an end.

We have plans for a number of workshops already underway – you'll have seen on the website that the Peter Syrus Glastonbury day, the postponed Baroque Orchestra day and the ever-popular Tim Bayley Renaissance Wind Workshop are all going ahead, fingers crossed! There are also a couple of singing days in the pipeline – dates still being fixed, so look out for more information on the Website.

We will have to make some adjustments to the way we operate, in view of the ongoing Covid risk – for example, you will be asked, when you apply for a workshop, to sign a form with the kind of conditions such as "Don't come if you have a persistent cough" which have become very familiar. We're also making arrangements to accept online payments for workshops (see Treasurer's report).

Events don't organise themselves! We are greatly indebted to members who regularly arrange workshops. It would be good to have more offers, particularly if you know of a good venue in your area.

We also need to recruit new members. As of a few weeks ago, our total membership was 156 individuals and 10 organisations. In a move towards attracting some younger people, your committee agreed at a recent meeting that those between 18 and 25 – whether or not they are students - should pay only half of both the subscription and event fee.

You might also like to mention SWEMF to colleagues in your choirs, orchestras and other groups. A good way to get people involved is to invite them to a workshop – then hopefully they will be hooked!

Now the enjoyable part of the report where it's my pleasure to thank all our committee members for their unfailing and valuable support during the past year.

We are saying Goodbye to Fenella Spiers who as Membership Secretary for the past 8 years has played a key role. We are grateful for all the work she has put in and expressed our gratitude with a Hobby craft voucher, which Fenella said would be "put to good use".

We're delighted that Jenny Tribe has volunteered to become our new Membership Secretary. Having been co-opted as assistant Membership Secretary during the year, she is already well up to speed.

We've welcomed a new representative for Devon, Marilyn Pocock, who has been a great addition to the committee. Marilyn was co-opted during the year but we'll now be asking you to confirm her appointment and that of Jenny.

(Rick Fitzsimmons who was co-opted as Diary Editor during lockdown, will also need to be confirmed in post.)

We still have a vacancy for a Wiltshire representative which we'd very much like to fill.

While all members of the committee are a joy to work with, I feel I must single out a number of people who make a huge contribution to the running of SWEMF:

our wonderful Web Editor Sara, whom I am told other EMFs would like to clone;

Rick our Diary Editor who seems to have produced the Diary alongside singlehandedly rebuilding his local village hall;

our Secretary Althea whom I have never yet managed to flummox, no matter how daft my questions;

and our Honorary Treasurer Jonathan who has kept our finances on an even keel through this difficult time.

A very big thank you on behalf of all our members

Finally, by the time of next year's AGM I will have been Chair of SWEMF for 10 years, so I think it will be time for a change. I would therefore like to step down from the role at that point. I hope that by giving you this notice I've allowed you plenty of time to find the right person to lead SWEMF forward into a successful future."

Althea said what an excellent Chairman Clare is, always ready with suggestions and her vast musical knowledge and experience, always proactive in anything that needs to be done.

Very many thanks to her for all that she does for SWEMF.

There was an outbreak of applause.

4. Treasurer's report

Jonathan commented that Finances were in a good state (as usual) and pointed out that since some events occurred in one financial year and were paid for in another, the Signed accounts and Event breakdown did not match completely. Overall, there was a small profit. Membership was sustained at the same level last year but currently is down 25%, based on subscriptions so far paid. The subscriptions pay for general running – Diary, Website, Zoom fees – and events were largely self-financing. We would need to look at event costs if the format used for the David Allinson talk were followed: David was paid a fee by SWEMF and also, by arrangement, took all the monies paid. We currently bank with HSBC. They have announced that in future they will charge £60pa for an account and 40p for each cheque processed. Since we have both a Reserve account (approx £4,000) and a Current account (ditto), Jonathan would like to close the Reserve account and transfer the balance to the Current account. This move was approved by all.

About 2/3 of payments for subscriptions and events is currently done online. Do we want to move totally to online payments to avoid the HSBC cheque fee? There would be difficulties in tracing who has paid what, and refunds might be complicated. The secretary would need to be able to see accounts to verify transactions.

It was decided that there would be an in-depth discussion of this by the committee before members were surveyed.

One member queried staying with HSBC. Some other banks do not make charges to charities.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Peter Crispin, seconded by Elizabeth Gowers and agreed by all.

5. Previous events

Cancelled because of Covid-19

21 March 2020	Workshop for Voices and Instruments	Sherborne
18 April 2020	Workshop with Peter Syrus	Glastonbury
1-3 May 2020	Bristol Early Music festival	Bristol
9 May 2020	Baroque Orchestra Workshop	Culmstock
27 June 2020	Workshop and AGM	Thornbury

The AGM was subsequently held on Saturday 22 August 2020 via Zoom

Zoom sessions in 2021

2 January	Various Christmas music for participation, organised by Clare Griffel
6 February	Bruce Saunders: "Building a concert programme"
6 March	David Allinson: "Polyphony shouldn't be taken for granted"
3 April	Chorales from St Matthew Passion, practical session organised by Clare Griffel
1 May	2 conversations about strings: (a) "Making an instrument": Agnieszka Nalazek, interviewed by Marilyn Pocock; (b) "Contrasting modern and period instruments": Jacqui Robertson-Wade and Michael Williamson
7 May	Bristol Early Music Festival: talks and performances online
5 June	Philippa Waite: "Introduction to Baroque Dance Rhythms – Gavotte and Gigue" Active participation was encouraged. Attendees included some from Germany.

Clare said it was sad to see the cancellation of some events but encouraging that some are being resuscitated. Freelance musicians had had a very hard time.

6. Forthcoming events

25 September	(postponed) Baroque Playing Day arranged by Sylvia Davies & Dick Little: venue tbc <i>This has been postponed since Cheddar Primary School, such a suitable venue, has not replied to requests (reported by Heather Gibbard) and is presumably not available. It was later suggested that another attempt at communication might be made now that schools are back in operation.</i>
16 October	Peter Syrus: Masses and Motets of Jacob Obrecht; St John's Church, Glastonbury arranged by Venetia Caine (postponed from May 22 and June 26 because of Covid restrictions) <i>Venetia Caine is applauded for her extraordinary persistence in finally holding this event after two postponements.</i>
6 November	Baroque Orchestra Day with Michael Williamson and Jacqui Robertson-Wade at Culmstock, organised by Val Hind

2 April 2022 Renaissance Wind Day with Tim Bayley in Gloucester Cathedral arranged by Simon Pickard

24 September 2022 Baroque Playing Day arranged by Dick Little and Debbie Nicholas, venue TBC
Sylvia Davies has retired from organising this event. Dick will continue with Debbie.

There were plans to hold an event with Angus Smith, "Choral Ambassador" for Stainer & Bell at two different locations (Cheltenham and Thorverton?). He would be the conductor and will shortly produce a budget and possible dates.

Members expressed the hope that some events would continue via Zoom, since wider participation was possible. A mixture of live and Zoom events would be welcomed, possibly with recordings put on YouTube.

7. Election of Officers

(a) Sara Scorey wishes to retire from the committee and therefore would no longer be a Trustee, but she will remain as Web Editor. This will require a minor change to paragraph 4: Officers and Committee, of the 2014 Constitution, which includes Web Editor. ie omit Web Editor from the list of Officers
All were in favour of this change. Althea will report to the Charity Commission.

(b) Currently, the Committee is as below.

Clare said she was delighted that all are willing to stand.

Clare Griffel	Chairman
Jonathan Tribe	Honorary Treasurer
Althea Hamlyn	Secretary
Jenny Tribe	<u>Co-opted</u> as Membership Secretary from April 2021
Rick Fitzsimmons	<u>Co-opted</u> as Diary Editor from January 2020
Heather Gibbard	Somerset representative
Elizabeth Gowers	Dorset representative
Peter Crispin	Cornwall representative
Sonia Jackson	Gloucestershire representative
Marilyn Pocock	<u>Co-opted</u> as Devon representative from February 2021
Vacant	Wiltshire representative

All were in favour of those co-opted being confirmed and the Committee was approved as above.
Althea will report changes to the Charity Commission.

Committee meetings will continue via Zoom so that all can attend.

8. AOB as notified to Secretary (secretary@swemf.org.uk or 2 Church Lane, Berkeley, GL13 9BN) in advance of the meeting.

Rick led a discussion on the function of the Diary. He said that over the last 18 months it had necessarily been largely online because of the practicalities of getting the Diary printed and put into envelopes for 150+ postings. Fewer than 10 members do not use email and were sent copies by post.

Since there are few events and therefore few reports, the Diary largely duplicates the Website and quickly becomes out-of-date.

Should the Diary continue in this limited form, include something more interesting (eg. learned articles) or be in another form?

A monthly online printable newsletter, with a reminder of forthcoming events, was considered a useful idea. It was said that event-application forms often contained interesting information; this could be included. Difficulties of printing were mentioned.

It was decided that members would be surveyed following further discussion in Committee.

9. Date of next meeting

Sometime next summer as usual.

There will be a (Zoom) committee meeting soon.

This meeting closed at 3.40pm

Althea Hamlyn
6-9-21