

Members of Paddock Wood Choral Society at a rehearsal for the group's Christmas concert at St Andrews' Church, Paddock Wood

Birthday buzz surrounds Group's festive concert



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The music started 35 years ago and it has not stopped since. Paddock Wood Choral Society is preparing to celebrate its anniversary and anticipation is building ahead of next week's Christmas concert. The mixed choir, which has about 65 members, formed in January 1980 and a lot has changed since. It started off performing a variety of requiems, something it still does, although some pop music has also been introduced. Music director Adrian Pitts, who has held his post for nearly 10 years, said: "Our motto is to provide high quality music for good people. "We are an inclusive, happy and friendly choir who don't hold auditions. It's a pleasure to be with them." The fact that it's still going in these times is great as a lot of music groups do fold." Mr Pitts, who is also assistant head teacher at Tonbridge grammar School, is the choir's fourth music director.

Founder Graham Dibbens was the first. He was the music master at Mascalls School in Paddock Wood, and set up the group as an adult education class in 1979. It was held in the evenings and attracted between 20 and 30 people before going on to become an independent choral society. Tony Starr took over the reins after Mr Dibbens and his tenure was followed by Gareth Stubberfield. The society performs three concerts a year and these are usually hosted by St Andrew's Church in Maidstone Road, Paddock Wood, on a Saturday evening. Rehearsals take place on Tuesday evenings during school term time between 7.45pm and 9.30pm in the Wallis Room at St Andrew's Church. This year's Christmas concert will take place on Saturday, December 13, at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £12 and are available on 01892 822448 or by email at xmas14@paddockwoodchoral.org.uk. For more information, go to www.pwcs3.weebly.com

FOND MEMORIES



Founding members Sheila Miller and Jill Marshall have worked with all four choirmasters. Mrs Marshall still sings with the group and will be performing at this year's Christmas concert.

She said: "It's a lot of fun and I have a lot of good Memories." "In the 1980s we would visit the Royal Albert Hall and sing with 2,000 voices, a tradition we did for about six years." "That was a lot of fun." Mrs Miller left the choir two years ago because she felt her voice was no longer up to the job but she still visits all the group's shows. She still sings with the Hospice in the Weald choir. She said: "I have a lot of good memories from the group, which has changed a lot." "I remember when it first started, during rehearsals I would pull faces at Jill to put her off her lines.