

NewSPAL

The performing arts library in Surrey

Monthly Update

Hello and welcome to the October newsletter,

Premises update

In our last newsletter we mentioned the difficulties being faced in finding a way of bringing NewSPAL to Woking.

Sadly we have now been formally told by Julie Fisher, who is Chief Executive at Woking Borough Council, that they are no longer able to support the relocation of NewSPAL to Woking. They have offers of a commercial let for the building previously earmarked for us on Commercial Way, and in the current financial climate they cannot justify turning that down, nor have they been able to identify an alternative. Frustratingly, we are forced to consider the Woking option a dead end.

We know that you will be just as disappointed as we are to hear this news. Your trustees are conscious that an enormous amount of support, energy, enthusiasm and of course money has been donated to NewSPAL on the basis of the original 2018 offer from Woking Borough Council, and we had hoped that we were well on the road to a fruitful future for the Performing Arts Collection in the town centre there when the Morris House building was identified for us in 2020, and planning permission given in March this year. Despite our best efforts to find a constructive way forward with Woking, leadership changes at Woking Borough Council and the adverse consequences for the Council's finances of (in particular) COVID (not fully covered by the Government) seem to have been the main reasons for the reversal of Woking's support for NewSPAL. In the meantime, the collection is still being housed at Ewell Library where Surrey Libraries continue to enable users to access the materials. We hope that many of you are enjoying making music again this autumn with help from the Surrey collection.

We are committed to finding another solution which will enable the collection to stay together, with expert staffing and bespoke cataloguing systems, and to give it a future which keeps it commercially viable and makes it more widely available. To that end we are currently exploring the possibility of continuing to house the collection at the Bourne Hall, where Ewell Library is based, but under the independent management of NewSPAL. There would be a number of potential benefits to this scheme, not least that we may be able to get the new service up and running more quickly and with less disruption to users during the transition period. It is early days but we have had a cautiously positive response from Surrey Libraries to our proposal and are hopeful that we will be able to take the idea forward. We will of course keep you updated with any further news on this important, but potentially positive, change in NewSPAL's future.

David Lees- from Mark Welling

Many supporters of NewSPAL were also members of FOSPAL (the Friends of Surrey Performing Arts Library, a separate charity which was dissolved earlier this year). They know the enormous contribution made over many years to FOSPAL, and the performing arts in Surrey in general, by David Lees who sadly passed away (aged 90) on 27 September 2021.

David was a leading member of the campaign group which, in the late 1990s, fought to keep the Surrey Performing Arts Library collection together when its former home in West Street, Dorking was scheduled to close. That campaign eventually led to the retention of SPAL by Surrey County Council as a specialist library with its own experienced staff in a new home at Denbies Wine Estate, generously supported by Sir Adrian White and his family. The campaign group eventually formed itself, under David's leadership, into FOSPAL which David chaired for more than fifteen years. FOSPAL organised a series of fascinating talks and events at SPAL, free to all, involving a wide range of people (some very well-known) across all the performing arts to raise awareness of SPAL and bring more people into it so that they could understand its value.

David had the knack of persuading speakers and performers to participate for often no fee (and only minimal expenses) and donations from those attending provided funds to buy additional equipment (e.g. the piano, new tables and chairs) to enhance SPAL for its users and the staff. He was a devoted and stalwart champion of SPAL and will be remembered by all who knew him in that capacity for his gentle but determined manner, laced with an under-stated sense of humour, his meticulous attention to detail and his generous and inclusive approach to leading the charity. When Surrey Libraries decided to close SPAL at Denbies he was, for obvious reasons, dismayed but strongly supportive of the new campaign to save it which subsequently became NewSPAL. He will be greatly missed not only by his widow Ann and his family but by all who knew him.

Encore

You may already know that the new Encore21 service has gone live. If you're not able to find the vocal or orchestral sets you want in the Surrey collection, Encore21 will tell you where else to look. There are 102 participating libraries, so it's more than likely that you'll find it there. [Click here](#) to find the new service, and [here](#) for further information about the service.

Composer of the month

This month we take a look at the life and work of Sir John Tavener.

In fact, Victoria, NewSPAL's previous Project Manager spent a weekend in the company of Sir John Tavener as his Artist Liaison during the 2011 [Manchester International Festival](#). Victoria remembers Tavener as a kind and humble person who was a joy to work with.

To read the article [click here](#).

Upcoming events

BROCKHAM CHORAL will perform HANDEL'S MESSIAH with the ACADEMY of ANCIENT MUSIC

on the 4th DECEMBER 2021 at 7.30 pm.

The concert conducted by COLE BENDALL will be performed in ST. Martin's Church, Dorking, RH4 1UX

Admission Adults £15 in advance £20 on the day
Children, Students under 25 in full-time education £10

Tickets by email: brockhamctickets@gmail.com
More information & Tickets www.brockhamchoral.org

Please do forward this to members of your group or any contacts who may be interested in keeping up to date with NewSPAL news.

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