

THROUGH CHANGING SCENES

So, you're interested in a *Through Changing Scenes* performance taking place at your church. You have probably been to a TCS already; if not, please try to get to one as that really is the best way to prepare for your own. If possible, take along all those interested, especially anyone who might be involved in the research or presentation – and of course the vicar or minister or anyone else who might need to be reassured!

We have performed over twenty-five TCS's now in almost as many different churches, ranging from small village to suburban, from ancient to modern, from spacious to cosy (if you've been to Greensted you'll know what we mean), from perishing to roasting, and from well-resourced to distinctly challenging. Without exception we've had great fun and it is always a privilege to share in the life and history of a church community in this way.

The notes below are the fruit of our rich experience; you can probably learn most about our past projects by reading between the lines. Please do read carefully, especially the WHY section, and feel free to ask lots of questions from us or from those involved from the various churches listed below (we can easily put you in touch). It is quite a big commitment for several people, most especially the researcher(s) and co-ordinator, but these notes can help to make it a fairly smooth process for all concerned. If you think that a TCS would be right for you please get in touch and we can, as they say, take it from there.

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WHERE AND WHEN ~ PREVIOUS AND PLANNED VENUES

St Mary's, Stapleford Tawney	January 1993 and June 1993
St Michael's, Theydon Mount	February 1994
St Mary's, Stapleford Abbotts	April 1996
St Andrew's, Greensted	July 1996 (2 performances)
All Saints, High Laver	February 1997, April 2004
St Anne's, Chingford Hatch	January 1998 and June 2001
All Saints', Lambourne	June 1998
All Saints', Highams Park	October 1998
All Saints', Epping Upland	May 1999
St Mary's, Chigwell	May 1999
St Mary's, Matching	August 1999
St Mary's, Hatfield Broad Oak	July 2000
St Mary's, Moreton	October 2000
St Alban's, Coopersale	May 2002
St Mary's, Gillingham (Dorset)	June 2002 and May 2003
St Nicholas, Fyfield	May 2003
St Christopher's, Willingale	September 2004
Priory Church of St Laurence, Blackmore	September 2005, February 2008 and recital September 2006
St Mary Magdalen, Magdalen Laver	January 2007
St Mary's, S. Woodford	October 2007
St Peter & St Paul, Stondon Massey	April 2008

WHAT

THROUGH CHANGING SCENES events are presentations that lead the audience through the experiences of a church and community over many generations, and often many centuries. The narrative, delivered by one or more readers, is interspersed with thematically or historically related musical items. From the earliest days of church life in that place we are introduced to key characters and events, reminded of the state and extent of church buildings at different times, the forms of service and the conditions for worshipping. Stories of local events and characters that have shaped the life of church and community are interspersed with more factual details in an informal and entertaining way and we usually end with a look towards the future. Performances run continuously for around 1 hour 20 minutes and take place either in the evening or late afternoon (sometimes preferable at darker times of year and also to suit elderly people and families who wish to bring older children).

WHO

At the presentation itself, the audience will see one or more narrators as well as *Tuneful Accord*, directed by Christine Gwynn who is also the co-ordinator between *TA* and the church. Other key people are the researcher(s) and co-ordinator from the church and, of course, the usual band of behind-the-scenes helpers.

TUNEFUL ACCORD is a flexible ensemble of musicians, mainly singers, who are the constant factor in the *TCS* events. We have also been engaged to sing at special occasions. For *TCS* events we usually number from 10-16, depending on the programme and venue. We offer our services for free in the *TCS* projects; some expenses are charged, currently around £160, to cover music, a publicity mail-shot and some travel and administrative expenses.

WHY

The aims of these events are threefold:-

- To strengthen links between the church and the local community;
- To bring to life the rich background of the church and locality;
- To offer interest, entertainment and, we hope, encouragement to the people of the church today.

You will note that income generation does not feature on this list. For the records, recent events have raised between £600 and £1300 and money is of course generated indirectly as the church profile may be raised in the locality and new people drawn to attend other functions and/or services. However, money-raising is very much secondary to the factors listed above as we aim to share and celebrate God's gifts within our communities and to make these occasions accessible to all. We have a policy that low-priced concessions are offered to those on benefit as well as to students of any age. (Policy on OAP concessions is variable – we are open to local advice!). You will note from the information below that pricing is one of the factors that needs to be agreed between the church and *TA* before anything goes to print, this is also because, for obvious reasons, we need to maintain reasonable consistency between each *TCS* and the next.

EVENT GUIDELINES

Each of these events involves careful collaboration between *Tuneful Accord* and the church or parish concerned. The following guidelines are the hard won fruit of our previous projects; they are intended to ensure a smooth passage and minimum stress for all concerned. We hope that you will receive the guidelines in the spirit in which they are meant and will feel free to make appropriate adaptations as we work together.

ITEMS THAT NEED TO BE AGREED AT THE OUTSET

- **COORDINATOR** This person will cover liaison between *TA*, the church (e.g. PCC, church council, minister etc.) and those members of the church directly involved in the project.
- **RESEARCHER(S) and SCRIPT WRITER(S)** Someone who is already knowledgeable about local history and is involved in the church is ideal as a researcher. Experience has shown that most researchers dig up at least twice as much information as is necessary for about 40 minutes of talk. Aim to produce a booklet and then decide which bits are really suitable for the medium of entertainment for a non-specialist audience. You may decide to ask someone else to compile the script, which needs to be lively, engaging and easy to assimilate on first hearing and is a very different skill from preparing a historical pamphlet, for example!
- **NARRATOR(S)** Need to be clear, engaging and audible and prepared to put in a fair amount of rehearsal time including some time with *TA* (a couple of sessions, maximum).
- **DATE**
- **START TIME** (normal running length is 1 hour 20/30 minutes, no interval). Late afternoon is worth considering in the darker months of the year.
- **TICKET PRICE** (see notes under **WHY** on low concessionary price tickets)
- **"IN AID OF....."?** Is there a 'Friends of Church' who should be mentioned anywhere in publicity? Also, what disabled access is there?
- **TUNEFUL ACCORD'S EXPENSES**, usually around £160
- **CONTACT NUMBER(S) FOR BOX OFFICE** (personal and/or local shop). Needs to be someone (or some two!) who are available a lot of the time, day and evening. The system usually works best when phone enquirers are asked to send a cheque and s.a.e., so box office personnel need to be prepared to send out tickets and keep records.
- **PUBLICITY START DATE**
- **PROGRAMME CONTENT AND PRICE** (if any). Production of programme content is a collaborative effort between *TA* and the church. Use the opportunity to tell people about your church life, services, events etc.!

TASKS/RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR TO THE EVENT

(TA = Tuneful Accord)

	TA	CHURCH
LIAISON		
PARISH/TA/PCC etc.	CG	Co-ordinator required
PERFORMANCE		
CONTENT	TA will be responsible for music selection and will advise on script	Researcher(s) needs to compile information from local/church records, memories etc. and work information into a suitable script - could collaborate with script writer(s) .
PRESENTATION	singing and organ playing plus any other musical requirements	Narrator(s) [TA can provide reader(s) e.g. for short extracts, letters, poems etc. if required.]
PUBLICITY		
POSTER DESIGN	in 'house' style TA has a regular designer	Map for reverse of handbill. This needs to be a sketch map to help visitors locate the church
POSTER COPYING (A5, A4, A3)		Printing (quantities as agreed)
TICKET DESIGN		Ticket design
TICKET PRINTING		Ticket printing
PROGRAMME		
CONTENT/COPY	Content pages and hymn(s) as agreed Deadline?	Programme contribution/production As agreed
PRINTING		Programme printing
REFRESHMENTS		
For TA after rehearsal on the day, please!		Refreshments for TA between rehearsal and performance
For all after concert		Refreshments for audience at end of TCS
PRESS CONTACT		
PUBLICITY AND REVIEWS		Local press including East Window
RECORDING (private use only)	As agreed	Recording – only as agreed Please note, recording is for archive purposes and special use only, e.g. to play to a housebound person. We regret that we cannot offer recordings for sale as this would entail a considerable amount of expense, complication and paper work.

ON THE DAY – comprehensive list of jobs that need covering by the church/parish on the day of performance (with variable amounts of pre-planning).

VENUE PREPARATION – someone to ensure that church is unlocked, heat is on if necessary, lights can be easily switched on and organ is unlocked with power supply on, prior to afternoon rehearsal and previous rehearsal in the church. It is very helpful if this person, or someone equally knowledgeable about the building, can be there to meet the performers just before the rehearsal.

SIGNPOSTS – particularly in “out of the way” venues, a few large and clear, strategically placed, signs can be very useful (will need prompt removal).

CO-ORDINATOR, FRONT OF HOUSE – one person for all to refer to; in overall charge in event of illness, accident, power cut, fire, etc.

MC – formal welcome, etc (NB: audiences should be sat down after final hymn, before any ‘thanks’, etc).

PARKING – may need supervision and/or lighting, e.g. torches/lamps.

ESCORT – help for elderly/disabled in access to building and seating; some people may need help whilst a driver is collecting/parking a car.

NB: Is there wheelchair access, or can it be arranged?

LOOS – certainly for performers between rehearsal and performance; if possible for any who need

TICKET SALES/CHECKING – at the door.

PROGRAMME DISTRIBUTION/SELLING – also at the door.

FLOAT – for both of above.

SEATING – access to extra seating, if required, for performers/audience.

LIGHTING – help with any additional lighting (may be candles, lamp for reader, etc).

NB: TA are sometimes able to provide extra “stage” lighting, if church electrics permit!

LIGHTS / SOUND-SYSTEM OPERATOR(S) – e.g. for lights at strategic point(s) in the programme / microphones for narrators / recording.

REFRESHMENTS – organiser(s), servers and clearers – both for singers’ teas (after rehearsal) and for helpers/audience where appropriate.

STAGE HANDS – help afterwards to return furnishings etc. to normal.