

Welcome to the 2020 Newsletter

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Bingham and District Choral Society is about to launch its innovative **Distance Learning Project**, an initiative centred around the **Folk Song Sequence** composed by Guy Turner and commissioned for our Jubilee Year celebrations in 2021-22. Full details of this and of the Society's preparations for the **Jubilee** are included in this Newsletter.



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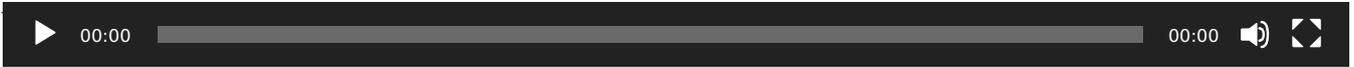
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Read the Chair's Report

This report is usually one of the easier of the Chair's duties. There would be a brief discussion of past triumphs, mention of anything significant from the AGM and a happy anticipation of concerts and events to come in the new session. I wish.

It is difficult to recall now, but the period from July to February was normal. We welcomed Michael Overbury as our accompanist in September and he has quickly become a (very decorative) part of the furniture. We enjoyed singing Baroque music in Newark Parish Church in November, although we all urgently need to rediscover the art of selling more tickets. The Christmas Concert was a joyous occasion, with the Carnarvon School choir in excellent form. And in January we started rehearsing Brahms' A German Requiem, in anticipation of a performance with our very good friends from Mansfield Choral Society, in the Minster in May. Also in prospect was Bach's Mass in B Minor, to be sung with our equally good friends Southwell Choral, in November.

Then along came Corona. Hardly a speck of dust on the horizon in February, by March the virus came to dominate all of our lives and on March 18th we suspended rehearsals.

We still have little idea when 'normal service' will be resumed, yet your Committee is 100% determined that we will survive this inconvenience and emerge strongly when circumstances permit. So I will now tell you what we have been doing.

The first thing that seemed important was to maintain contact with all of you, the members, and so the Bingham Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was born. The BBC broadcast weekly during April, May and June and will now continue fortnightly into the autumn. I know that the broad range of content has been much appreciated. Many people have contributed, but two deserve special thanks, Brad Poulson, our Treasurer and Guy Turner, our MD. Both have given unstintingly of their time and they have shown great ingenuity and inventiveness. And the project continues to rely on Brad (The Controller's) technical expertise.

At the same time we also set up the Self-Help scheme, which about half of you joined. Its purpose was to ensure that everyone who wished, could have contact with fellow choir members.

Soon after the suspension of rehearsals it became clear that the Brahms concert could not go ahead and then that Bach in November was equally doomed. At the time of this message we have no idea when public concerts will again be permitted. But we are still making plans and we hope to reschedule both these concerts.

The headline feature of this Newsletter is the Distance Learning Project. Brad Poulson's brainchild, this is centred around the Sequence of British Folk Songs that Guy has recently composed, at our commission. [Full details can be found elsewhere in this Newsletter.](#)

For a while we cherished the hope that we would be able to resume rehearsals in September. But since we can't work towards a concert, we thought lets make a CD of Christmas music. We have done enough ground work to establish that that idea could work. However, Carnarvon School pulled the plug on us, by cancelling our bookings for their Hall until further notice. They are worried about the possibility of cross contamination, which is entirely understandable. All other venues where we might rehearse seem to have similar hiring moratoria in place – unless you know differently??!!

Before we meet again, whenever that might be, we need to address the issue of safety. We are not a young group and it may be

that rehearsing together, even with a social distance of 2 metres between us, is too risky. To consider this and other difficult safety questions I have established an autonomous Safety Committee, consisting of Sally Ashton, John Bannister, Judy Unell and (Dr.) Tim Connery. Their considerations will regulate under what conditions we can restart rehearsals when venues become available.

We are not able to make any concrete plans yet for the rest of the 2020 – 2021 season. But we have already given considerable thought to the session 2021 – 22, which will see the 50th anniversary of our foundation. This (fingers crossed) will have two centrepiece concerts, the 'Last night of the Proms,' jointly with Mansfield Choral, in the Minster on November 27th next year and Handel's Messiah, jointly with Newark Choral Society, on April 30th 2022. You have already been involved in the selection of 'Proms' music and full details can be found in [Guy's report](#). Messiah was the first work performed by BDCS, back in 1972. More about our anniversary celebrations can be found in [Judy Unell's article](#).

We should have had our AGM in May and, not surprisingly our Constitution makes no provision for the effects of a pandemic. Your Committee has unanimously agreed that an AGM will be held as soon as is practicable. Until then, I am pleased to say that all members have agreed to remain in post. Until we are able to hold a General Meeting, all costs will be met from reserves.

We have been saddened by the death of loyal alto Pam Brooks and that of her fellow examiner (auditor) Hugh Holbrook, whose wife Joy continues to sing with us. Our sympathies also went out to Bob Middleton, whose wife died suddenly, and to Sheila Barwick, who lost her husband after a long illness. We are very sad that former Chair Jeff Crampton is seriously ill.

I finish by saying some heartfelt thank-yous, starting with Guy and Michael, who are a wonderful and wonderfully musical combination. I thank Huw Cadwallader and Dr. David Morgan, who are now our examiners. I thank David Atkins for running the 100 Club so smoothly. I thank very many of you, who contribute for example by providing tea and coffee on the rota, or by setting out and putting away chairs, or by helping at concerts, especially at Christmas. I was out of action due to a fall early this year and I want to thank Sally Ashton, Vice Chair, for running things smoothly in my absence. I also want to thank you for all your messages of good will at that time. And lastly and very sincerely I want to thank all of the Committee. There could not be a more hard-working, practical, thoughtful, likeable and considerate bunch of people. You, and I, are lucky to have them.

Richard Joyner

BDCS Distance Learning

'enabling choir rehearsal from home'

In the absence of regular choir rehearsals during lockdown, many choirs have experimented with remote or 'virtual' rehearsals using Zoom or other IT conference facilities. The general experience of most is that while beneficial for keeping in touch with your choral cohort, the singing experience is less satisfying. With that learning in mind, BDCS is about to launch what I describe as 'distance learning', a half-way house between physical and virtual rehearsals, supported by rehearsal materials which means that you can rehearse forthcoming choral works at home, at your pace, and in a way that suits you, but knowing that your choir colleagues are doing something similar, ultimately working towards joint rehearsals and a performance.



With our 49th year as a choir approaching, we know that it is likely to be a disrupted year and it will be hard to make definite plans based on what we will be performing. So, with that in mind, our thoughts go towards our Jubilee year (2021-2022) which we hope will be more predictable and see choirs once again being able to rehearse and perform together. This initiative is primarily about keeping us together as a unit, as much as it is about making quality music in restrictive circumstances, so that when we are once again able we will still have a choir that can get together to rehearse and perform. So, this is aimed at ALL current BDCS members (i.e. those that were enrolled with us for the 2019-2020 season just finished). There will be no cost to

members who wish to take part.

How it will work

All members will receive a complimentary copy of the Folk Song Sequence Score that Guy Turner has arranged for our Jubilee Prom Concert in 2021/2. This is currently being printed and will be your personal copy to keep as a souvenir of our forthcoming Jubilee year but will also be the score you use for the Prom Concert. Please take care of it, you can mark-up your copy with notes, but there are no spares!

There will be a new 'Distance Learning' page on the website. This will contain the individual rehearsal sessions for each piece we are learning. Each 'module' will comprise:

- A piano accompaniment - Michael Overbury has already recorded the piano accompaniment for all four folk song pieces,
- Guy conducting – Guy has already filmed these,
- Four professional singers have been recruited to record the Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Base parts,
- Warm-up routines
- Guy will also add appropriate introductions to each piece, commentary on difficult corners, or 'born to be flat' moments, advice about singing difficult sections, pronunciation etc.

In much the same way as with BBC Bingham, you will be able to choose just the piano accompaniment, the full four-part singers, or your individual voice part to practice and sing along with.

Timetable of events

- w/c 13th July – Soloists record their parts
- w/c 13th July – Committee volunteers will analyse the membership into logical groupings for distribution of material, and recruit volunteers to help
- w/c 20th July – Jeff Sutton (you will remember from the BDCS video we made) to edit the various modules (which are then loaded to the BDCS YouTube channel)
- July 22nd – Details of the Distance Learning initiative will be included in the annual newsletter that will be distributed via BBC Bingham
- w/c 27th July – Our website designer (Madeleine Parkyn) will prepare the website page
- August 5th – Launch the scheme via BBC Bingham, go live on the website with module 1 (Ca' the Yowes)
- August 6th, 7th, 8th – volunteers distribute the materials and instructions to members.

A second book of music is being prepared for all the other Prom pieces (where copyright allows), so that we can extend our distance learning initiative for the Prom concert and might be available for distribution at the same time. Clearly if we are able to meet for a workshop later in the year then these works would form the basis of that workshop.

Dr Brad Poulson

Email: brad.poulson@thebradleypartnership.com

Mobile: 07734 056618

Safety at Rehearsals

We hope that in due course we will be able to rehearse together again. However, the safety of all our members is of paramount importance. In order to monitor the evolving situation, an autonomous Safety Committee has been established whose terms of reference are that safety should be the only factor in its decisions. It will develop rules and protocols for the organisation of rehearsals.

The members of this Committee are: John Bannister and Sally Ashton (co-chairs), Judy Unell and Tim Connery.

Treasurer's Report – Brad Poulson

This Report, which was due to be given at the AGM, can be seen by following this link: [BDCS Treasurer's Report 2020](#)

Membership Subscriptions 2020/2021

Although no new members will be enrolled at the moment, we hope that as many as possible of our current members will be with us in our determination to resume singing.

Because we will not be able to carry out our previously planned programme, the Committee has decided that for the time being there will be no Membership subscription and the current costs will be covered by our reserves. Clearly, this will be subject to review as circumstances change.

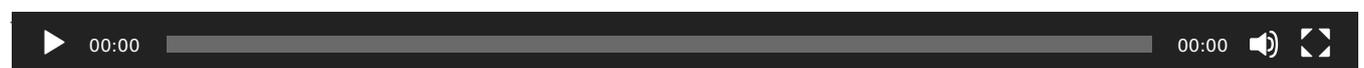
Appointment of Examiners

David Morgan will continue as an examiner. Very sadly, Pam Brooks, a member of the Choir for very many years, died in September 2019. Huw Cadwallader has been appointed to become an examiner in her place.

Pam Brooks was born into an RAF family in 1948, travelling widely as a child and thereby acquiring a number of foreign languages. She trained as a nurse in London and also gained a degree in history and politics. She learned to fly planes and helicopters and also trained as an accountant. She had to retire early from her teaching job when, aged just 45, she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. She was a committed member of the Choir for very many years, as well as being an Examiner of our accounts. She immersed herself in many aspects of village life in Cotgrave - the Church, the Ladies' Fellowship, the Advice Centre, school lunches and the British Legion (often as a flag bearer). She was an avid reader and story-teller. When she was no longer able to drive herself, Ziad would bring her to rehearsals and to the Church. She became very ill in June 2019 but, after seeming briefly to recover, died in QMC in September 2019.

Pam was always a very friendly and warm person whose presence was a great asset to the Choir. Despite her illness and disability, she was never heard to complain or show any self-pity. She set a wonderful example and is sorely missed.

(Thank you to her friend, Anne Toombs, for providing the biographical details)



Read the Music Director's Report

Usually this report would appear spoken at the AGM and then in print in the Annual Newsletter. This year – along with many other things – it is a bit different.

But the first part of it is normal – a look back on our achievements before life went crazy.

It seems an age ago, but the 2019 summer concert needs an enthusiastic mention. You will remember we did a selection of folk songs in a St Mary's Newark lunchtime concert. It is great to take part in these - it is our second time, and Stephen Bullamore always makes us very welcome. And of course these performances cost us nothing, which added to the pleasure.

This was of course our last concert with Ed Turner as accompanist. Michael has become so much part of the furniture – in the nicest possible way – that it seems odd that Ed was still with us only just over a year ago.

It was an enjoyable programme, well performed, though members' opinions varied about the inclusion of the African pieces from Alex Lestranger's *Zimbe*

Then came the autumn concert entitled *Joyful Baroque*, which was excellent. The soloists were all regulars – Ellie Martin, singing with us for the first time, though we know her well as a conductor, and then our former bursary winner, Emily Hodkinson; and Matthew Keighley and Stephen Cooper both making their third appearance with us.

The programme was quite special to me, because the Buxtehude Magnificat and the Purcell Ode were both in the first concert I conducted in Cambridge – indeed the Buxtehude was the first piece in that concert. The Vivaldi as always, was a joy, but of particular interest to me was Handel's *O Praise the Lord with One Consent*. I have had a copy of this for forty years but never looked at it or even heard it. But because it has exactly the same orchestra as the rest of our programme, I had a look – and it was a really good piece. The choir acquitted itself very well in this lovely programme, and we were once again lucky to have such able and friendly players in the orchestra fixed by Juliet Ward.

As always the Christmas concert was great fun to rehearse and to perform, and it was good to have my friend Ben Mills playing the organ.

Then of course we made a great start on the Brahms Requiem and *Schicksalslied* and were well on the way to having them ready for an excellent concert when Covid struck. I hope that once we are out of this Mansfield will be able to reschedule that concert and our ten weeks of hard work will not be wasted. But of course at this stage we do not know when choral concerts will be possible again – and even when they are there will be a glut of people needing the Minster and only so many Saturdays, so we will just have to see what happens. Similarly we were due to perform a joint concert with Southwell Choral, initially planned to be the B Minor Mass, but then changed to the Verdi Requiem, and then cancelled. again. What will happen about rescheduling that I do not know – though Southwell performs every term in the Minster and have advance bookings made, so they should find it easier to reschedule.

So of course the future is very uncertain, and we must keep our fingers crossed for the development of treatment and a vaccine, and indeed for adequate research into the risks of passing the virus through singing.

I had been very fired up by the idea of working together towards a Christmas CD recording, and it will be great if we can find a venue willing to house us at some point. The idea was to programme about ten choir carols with pianos, and another five with brass, with the brass groups providing two or three pieces as well. It would have been a good experience and a good Christmas present, and who knows, we might be able to put the plan in place one day, and possibly sooner than actual concerts will be possible.

I have really enjoyed working on BBC Bingham, and am looking forward to creating more 'programmes' in the future. It would be great to get feedback about things you have particularly enjoyed, and also any ideas for things you would like to see done – serious or just entertaining. We will need ideas from September.

Our Jubilee Prom Concert, which you have heard a lot about in 'BBC Bingham' is scheduled for November 2021, and we hope that by then concerts will be possible again.

The programme for that will include Elgar's The Music Makers and my Folk Song Sequence, as well as a plethora of short pieces by Bainton, Handel, Bizet, Bernstein, Elgar, and Parry etc. With us and Mansfield and the Nottingham Symphony Orchestra, that is very much something to look forward to.

Meanwhile we will be having distance learning sessions on my Folk Song Sequence, to look forward to. This will be launched through BBC Bingham on August 5th and Brad, Michael and I have been working on the content for this, with help from some singer friends, including Ellie Martin. You will have materials to help you learn my Folk Song Sequence at home – it is not especially hard – and also some of the smaller pieces for the Jubilee concert. That way we will be working towards something tangible.

As always I would like to express my thanks to the choir's very efficient committee and programme committee, and of course to Michael as our excellent accompanist.

It has been a very strange time, but the albeit virtual community of Bingham Choral has been an important part of my staying sane during lock down.

Our Jubilee Year 2021-2022

Bingham and District Choral Society originated in a choral singing evening course at Toot Hill School in 1972. It was led by Neville Ward, Head of Music at the school and was so well received by the 40 or so participants that it evolved into an independent choir, which has now grown to around 90 members. Neville remained Musical Director for 43 years until Guy Turner took over the baton in 2015.

Our 2021/22 season will therefore mark the choir's Golden Jubilee and, despite the current disruption caused by the pandemic, we are counting upon being up and running for a wonderful sequence of three celebratory concerts to mark this very significant moment in our history. Each one will involve collaboration with another local choir with whom we have worked in the past.

The first will be a Proms-style concert with Mansfield Choral Society on 27th November 2021 at Southwell Minster. BDCS members have taken part in a popular vote to choose items for the evening's programme, which will range over the centuries from Handel to Bernstein. Favourites such as Parry's Jerusalem and Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance No. 1 will provide plenty of opportunities for audience participation. Guy Turner has been commissioned to write a Folk Song Sequence for the second half of the Prom, with songs from all parts of the United Kingdom.

The choir's first public concert in March 1972 featured a performance of Handel's Messiah. It is fitting, therefore, that in the second concert of our Jubilee year, on April 30th 2022 in the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Newark, we will be singing Messiah once again, this time with Newark Choral Society.

As well as conducting BDCS, Neville Ward was for many years the conductor of Scunthorpe Choral Society. We are particularly pleased that Scunthorpe CS will be joining us for the third concert of the Jubilee series. This will be a lunch-time concert at the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Newark, on June 18th 2022.

Other plans afoot include the special branding of publicity for the Jubilee series and a souvenir programme to cover the three concerts. We are also hoping to work with a partner charity so that this memorable moment in BDCS history will enable us to raise funds for a good cause in our community.

The Committee

All current members of the Committee have agreed to continue in their existing roles for the time being: **Chair:** Richard Joyner; **Vice Chair:** Sally Ashton; **Treasurer:** Brad Poulson; **Secretary:** Val Morgan; **Programme Chair:** Peter Iley; **Librarian:** Margot Anderson; **Publicity:** Judy Unell; **Box Office:** Tim Connery; **Membership:** Janet Chapman; **Fundraising:** John Bannister; **Ordinary Members:** Beryl Cottrill, Juliet Ward and Tina Warrington.

Concert Reviews

16th November 2019 – Joyful Baroque

Our autumn concert took place in St Mary Magdalene Church, Newark. Guy Turner conducted, and the choir was well-supported by soloists Ellie Martin (soprano), Emily Hodkinson (mezzo-soprano), Matthew Keighley (tenor), and Stephen Cooper (baritone) – all familiar to us. The orchestra, led by David Wood, was the Bingham Chamber Orchestra, 'fixed' by Juliet Ward. Our new accompanist, the well-known organist Michael Overbury, played continuo on his own beautiful harpsichord.

On this occasion we sang four Baroque pieces: the less known but captivating Magnificat attributed to Buxtehude; Purcell's Ode for St Cecilia's Day: Welcome to all the Pleasures; Vivaldi's Magnificat and Handel's Chandos Anthem no.6: O Praise the Lord with one Consent. Although the audience was perhaps smaller than for some previous concerts, the choir sang these enjoyable and uplifting pieces with warmth and gusto, responding to Guy's sensitive conducting - in spite of his difficulties in rehearsal with some mismatched scores. The orchestra did full justice to Purcell's short but delightful Chaconne in G Minor.

14th December 2019 – Christmas Concert

Slightly fewer tickets were sold this year than in 2018, but this could be partly attributed to the smaller size of Carnarvon School Choir – 30 instead of 40 children. With Guy as conductor, we were joined by Bingham Brass, led by Colin Smith, and organist Ben Mills, Choral Scholar at Southwell Minster.

As usual, this traditional and joyous event began with Once in Royal David's City. This was followed by older and more modern carols sung by the choir, items by the children and some strong congregational singing of O Little Town of Bethlehem; Unto Us is Born a Son; and Hark the Herald. Ben's solo was well appreciated, and towards the end the children joined us for a joyous rendering of The Twelve Days of Christmas. Congregation, choirs and brass joined together for the final O Come All Ye Faithful.

People gave generously to the collection at the end for Framework and the Alzheimer's Society, and this was followed by wine and mince pies served to all by choir members.

Coronavirus

Owing to the pandemic, all events planned for the rest of the season have had to be cancelled. These included a Wine Tasting in March, the Brahms Requiem Concert with Mansfield Choral Society in May, our AGM, also in May, and our Summer Concert in the Minster in July.

Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that the other concerts and events planned for this autumn will take place.



Bingham Broadcasting Corporation:

An Appreciation

Few choirs can have been as visionary in their response to the lockdown as the Bingham and District Choral Society. Grasping the opportunity to launch a new media institution, on March 25th THE BBC (capitals for disambiguation) went on air – or more correctly, if prosaically, on-line. This was no mere whimsical play on an acronym, but a bold re-affirmation of the great Reithian mission to, ‘inform, educate and entertain’. Oh, and let’s be clear, though there are pictures and video involved, as a genre, THE BBC is quite firmly Radio.



Over (so far) 15 episodes, we have enjoyed talks, quizzes, a panel show, and a series of Desert Island Discs, all masterfully engineered by Brad Poulson. Each of these have combined, in different degrees, the three pillars of the national broadcaster’s mission. Of course, they have tended to focus more on education and entertainment: the purely informational elements of the other BBC – like the shipping forecast or the fatstock prices (of fond memory) – being less easy to accommodate. Nonetheless if we think of information as the communication of facts rather than opinion or commentary, there has been plenty of it. Guy’s music quizzes are of course fairly bursting with facts, but then so are his illustrated talks. For example, from his fascinating introduction to the life of a cathedral choir (episode three) we learn two indisputable facts: that the Decani and Cantoris at Southwell are on different sides to most other cathedrals, and that, ‘French choirs are generally rubbish’.

So, to education and entertainment. Here THE BBC knows its demographic. This is Radios 3 and 4 territory, the audience that checks its pandemic statistics on ‘More or Less’, that joins Petroc Trelawny for a Friday morning singalong. How then has THE BBC fared in satisfying these exacting consumers?

Overall, pretty impressively. Guy’s series of music talks formed the core of the educational content. At once erudite and stimulating, they were delivered in an engaging style, though one that I would place closer to the late Antony Hopkins than to Tom Service. He might not consider this a bad thing. The Thiman episode stands out for its infectious advocacy of an unjustly eclipsed composer as well as a charming evocation of that most remote of historical periods, the recent past. Though I confess that, having sung ‘The Last Supper’ about fifty years ago it left no lasting impression on me. Whereas the final chorus of ‘Olivet to Calvary’, for all its rather cloying sentimentality, still lives in the memory.

Entertainment, famously, came a poor third in John Reith’s dour Presbyterian judgement. It is frightful to imagine, then, the righteous scorn spreading over those craggy, vulpine features at the proposal (episode 7) of a panel show in which the object is to lie the most convincingly. He left the BBC in 1938 and so his views on Desert Island Discs, which began in 1942, are not recorded. We can surmise that he would not have been a fan, except, perhaps of the ninth episode, in which the Reverend Canon W.H. Elliott took the opportunity to preach a sermon for the entire show. Sandwiched as this was between No 8 Joan Jay (a Windmill Girl) and No 9 (Arthur Askey) we can imagine how it went down with the troops who were its first audience on the British Forces Programme.

No chorus girls so far on THE BBC’s guest list, but plenty to entertain us. Given the specialised field of castaways – four out of five professional musicians – the musical choices have been, predictably, of a high standard. But there have also been some surprises. How delightful to find amongst Emily Hodkinson’s choices, both Finzi’s ‘My Spirit Sang all Day’ and Benny Hill’s ‘Ernie :

The Fastest Milkman in the West' . And there has been no trace of self indulgence. With three professional singers included - one actually described as a 'diva' – no one has been tempted to emulate the chutzpah of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf who famously chose seven of her own recordings plus one of the prelude to Der Rosenkavalier from a disc on which she also sang.

The fifth castaway was somewhat controversial. Not because he is a scientist and part-time comedian rather than a musician. Certainly not on account of his musical choices – that extraordinary Canadian baritone singing the Finzi. But because he is the host!! Is this why he is pictured with his back to us, in a vain attempt to conceal his identity? But no. As usual, THE BBC has done its research and found a precedent: Roy Plomley was himself the 15th castaway interviewed by the show's producer Leslie Perowne on May 7th 1942.

We come finally to the choice of luxury, that window of insight into the idiosyncrasies of the castaway. Here however it pains me to enter a discordant note. Three castaways chose keyboards: Michael Overbury his clavichord; Emily, a piano, and the complete songs of Ned Rorem (nice); Guy - and you will see where I am going with this – a grand piano. Now I do not need to remind THE BBC audience of the stricture placed upon grand pianos by Roy Plomley, on the grounds that they may be used either as shelters or rafts. How surprising then to find our urbane host Richard – generally such a stickler for propriety – nodding this through without demur. We can only suppose that Guy had solemnly undertaken not to put it to such uses, much as Hermione Gingold was allowed to take the Albert Memorial after she promised not to live in it.

What fun all this has been! Of course, we want to be back singing together, enjoying Richard's vintage jokes, and eating biscuits and flapjack. But won't we also feel some regret, after this strangest of springs and summers, when eventually THE BBC closes down.

John Tomlinson – Choir Member

A cartoon of the BBC team by Linda Hunter



BDCS Composing Competition

BDCS is delighted to announce a new competition for young composers in our area. Entrants are invited to compose a short accompanied piece for SATB Choir, with a prize worth £500 to the winner. The winning entry will be premiered by the Choir in 2021. It is open to composers under 30 years of age and living in the East Midlands. The closing date is 31 July 2020. [View full details here.](#)

Publicity, Website and Twitter

The BDCS website www.binghamchoral.org is now firmly established as the main publicity resource for the choir. It keeps members posted about everything from their place on the coffee rota to forthcoming concert dates and useful rehearsal aids. It is also the most important source of information for people outside the choir, including potential new members. Followers of our Twitter thread, @BinghamChoral, are frequently signposted to the website for further information on a news item, as are those who read our monthly updates in various local village and parish magazines.



Our new design team, Andrew James and Penny Prior, produced a splendid and much-praised design for the posters and programmes for our Joyful Baroque autumn concert in November 2019. At our Christmas Concert, we once again organised a charity collection. The proceeds were split between two charities, Framework and Alzheimer's Society. In a new departure this year, we then decided to invite a representative from each charity to visit us during a rehearsal to receive a replica cheque for the amount donated. This enabled members to hear more about the valuable work of the two organisations and also provided a chance to publicise the choir's community outreach.

Since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, publicity has inevitably lost momentum due to rehearsals being cancelled and the general uncertainty about the future. The BBC Bingham series of videos and podcasts, created and run by a talented team from within the choir, has not only kept choir members connected but has been made generally available through the website, helping to maintain the choir's local profile. At this point, no-one knows what the future will bring but we are looking ahead with hope to the BDCS 50th anniversary jubilee in 2021/22 and beginning to plan a programme and a publicity strategy to support a wonderful celebration of this important landmark in the choir's history.

Judy Unell – Publicity Officer

BDCS Programming Constraints

Many members have made helpful suggestions for certain full works and/or shorter pieces to be included in our concert programmes. These are all considered, but unfortunately many have to be rejected because of a number of constraints within which we have to work when compiling a programme.

The first and most obvious of these is the lack of a suitable venue in Bingham and adjacent towns. Whilst St Mary's Bingham is adequate for Christmas Carol concerts with organ accompaniment there is no room to fit in even a small orchestra and maximum audience capacity is only about 200.

Radcliffe St Mary's can hold about 300, although audiences have recently dwindled (even before the pandemic) and there are a lot of furnishings and fittings to be moved to accommodate even a fairly small orchestra. This puts up the cost to £3000-£4000 with a probable income of less than £2000 i.e a loss of £2000. is not unusual. We have recently started using St Mary's Newark, which has an audience capacity almost as big as Southwell Minster and we will explore this further e.g. a joint Messiah with Newark C S is planned there for 21/22 as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations. Bottesford Church is also under consideration.

Even though the Minster is considerably more expensive to hire, recent joint performances there, with Mansfield CS and a full orchestra, have been financially successful as the cost (loss) has been shared i.e. we lose less on a larger joint concert than on a smaller one on our own. This may well be the way forward especially if choir numbers are seriously reduced in future.

Many of the works that we perform are shorter than a full concert and still need a medium sized orchestra, but the number and balance of the players needed may vary significantly from one work to the next, so works in one concert have to be chosen as far as possible to utilise the same players to minimise costs. Likewise with soloists, where we also try, where possible, to utilise young (ish) local soloists with potential.

Overall our aim is to try to achieve a balance between all types of classical music from baroque to modern; from large Masses, Requiems etc. where full orchestras are preferred, to shorter pieces.

Peter Iley – Chair of the Programme Committee

Key Dates for Jubilee Year 2021-2022

See Our Jubilee Year article for further details.

- Saturday 27 November 2021 at Southwell Minster Proms Concert with Mansfield Choral Society
- Saturday 18 December 2021 Christmas Concert at Bingham Church
- 30 April 2022 at St Mary Magdalene Church, Newark Messiah with Newark Choral Society – chosen because it was BDCS's first-ever concert
- June/July 2022 – Summer Concert with Scunthorpe CS (for its association with Neville Ward), at St Mary Magdalene Church, Newark

Rehearsal Aids for Concerts

John Fletcher website: The site holds rehearsal files allowing users to listen to their individual part, with the accompaniment in the background, either on its own or along with the other parts. The music can be listened to online or downloaded as an mp3 file which allows the user to vary playback speed and slow down fast, intricate parts. Most of the music we will be performing in the next 12 months can be found on the site. For access to the site the Society pays an annual subscription based on the number of registered users. Spare places are available. If you are not registered to use the site but would now like to be, please contact Bob Middleton either at a rehearsal or by email at bob@mid33.plus.com. He will then register your email address and you will receive an email from the site allowing you to set up direct access using your email address and a password of your own choosing. If you are registered but are having trouble logging on or encountering any other problems using the site, please let Bob Middleton know.

www.choralia.net is a website where you can hear synthesised voices singing individual voice parts (it is very easy to download the necessary bit of free software). You can choose which voice part you would like to be highlighted.

Choraline produces CDs for the individual voice parts – 10% discount – Code available on request.

For further information view the Rehearsal Aids section of our website.

Fundraising

Every year the Choir undertakes a series of fundraising activities. These have been both consistently successful and enjoyable. They are also important. Without fundraising we would either have to raise the individual subscription, or cut back substantially on our concert activities. Please therefore continue to support ventures like the 100 Club. Also, if you have an idea for a fundraising activity (preferably legal) that you would be willing to organise, please contact any committee member, or email choir@binghamchoral.org.uk.

The 100 Club

David Atkins will once again be running the **100 Club**, which you and your friends are invited to join for £10 each per entry. The money goes into a kitty, with half being a contribution to choir funds. The rest will be distributed in six monthly prize draws (held in the last week of October, November, December 2020 and February, March and April 2021). The amount of prize money will depend on how many participants there are. Please ensure your payment is made by Wednesday 23 September 2020. You can enter as many times as you like and non-members can enter, too.

To subscribe, please send your payment online, if at all possible, which our Treasurer will sort out.

Electronic payments: sort code 30-90-89 Account no. 35138968 PLEASE BE SURE YOUR NAME IS IN THE DESCRIPTION

If you need to pay by cheque, payable to Bingham and District Choral Society, please post it direct to our Treasurer Dr B. Poulson, Hill House Cottage, Burgage Lane, Southwell NG25 0ER

If your details have changed since last year, please let the Membership Secretary know by email at 64janet.chapman@gmail.com

Easy Fundraising

Do you shop online? If so, every purchase you make could generate funds for the choir.

Go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause to sign up. The signing-up process is simple and need be done only once. You then enter your favourite retailer in the box. Click and you will be taken to your retailer's website, where you order your item in the usual way.

The retailer will then donate a percentage of the value of your purchase to BDCS. Every quarter Easyfundraising send our treasurer a cheque for the funds raised.

Easyfundraising couldn't be much easier – please use it and raise funds for the choir.

Amazon Smile

A further opportunity to contribute is through Amazon Smile. This is separate from the Easyfundraising scheme. You can nominate the choir as a beneficiary under Amazon Smile by clicking on [this link](#) . Please ensure that you enter the choir's name as follows:

Bingham and District Choral Society

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Bingham & District Choral Society

Life President Neville Ward

Registered Charity no. 503557

choir@binghamchoral.org.uk

Telephone: 0115 933 2353

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