



FRIENDS NEWS

Issue 20 May 2024



FROM THE CO- CHAIRS



Welcome to the Spring edition of our Newsletter.

This has been a very exciting time for us all.

I've commented below on the Circlesong concert. We also however enjoyed hugely a full rehearsal day with Bob Chilcott. In addition, the American composer Taylor Scott Davies joined us for a mesmerising introduction to his music, which we are as you will see performing in our November concert.

We have been focusing on the work of contemporary composers. This will over the next two Seasons be balanced by more traditional elements of the choral canon. In David, Tom and Anthony we have a truly remarkable professional triumvirate and they can and will lead us onwards and upwards.

Amy and I am aware and have been for some time that we must offer more to our Friends. The last few years have been seen many distractions and we need to focus much more upon growing the body of Friends. I do hope that as many of you as possible will attend our AGM on 3rd July at 7.00pm. Not just to listen to what my colleagues and myself have to say, (that's optional!) but to enjoy a chat and a drink with us. Our Friends are very much part of HCS.

Best Wishes

Paul and Amy

choir@harrogatechoral.org.uk

COMMITTEE REPORT

HCS Management Committee Report May 2024

The Harrogate Choral Society (HCS) Management Committee met on May 9, 2024, to discuss various organisational and operational matters. Key agenda items included the approval of previous meeting minutes, declarations of interest, and an executive update.

The executive update addressed issues like the delay in finalising accounts due to QuickBooks complications, venue considerations for upcoming concerts, and a problem with a hired piano at our March 2024 concert that has been the subject of discussions as to compensation with the hirer.

Impending policy updates were also highlighted, with a focus on updating the Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct and Data Protection policies by the end of June 2024.

The action plan for 2023-24 was reviewed, noting the need for ticket prices for the June concert.

Contract renewals for key personnel were discussed, highlighting the contributions of our Music Director and Deputy Directors.

Financial discussions included membership fee proposals for the 2024-25 season to be shared at the upcoming AGM on Weds 3rd July 2024. Marketing and publicity efforts were noted to be increasingly reliant on social media, and sponsorship strategies were discussed.

The meeting also covered safeguarding, health and safety, and updates on the Beati choir and membership matters.

Future concert planning was also addressed, with discussions on repertoire and venue options given the current limitations of available concert halls.

The meeting finished with proposed dates for the committee to meet in 2024-2025.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy 80th Birthday from Harrogate Choral Society

See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1010313886754865/> for HCS singing 'Happy Birthday' to Brian Kay

Dear Friends

I can hardly believe you went to all that trouble to wish this old timer a happy birthday, but I was deeply touched and can't thank you enough for thinking of me. Good singing too, which proves that you sing best when you really know the music!!

I had a wonderful day, all spent in the Royal Albert Hall conducting 2000 voices in the Mozart Requiem and on Monday I certainly felt my age ...! But it was a huge bonus to see you all on the video and I hope it won't be long before we can all be together again.

Meanwhile my thanks for your thoughts and much love from Gilly and me.

Brian.

CONCERT REVIEW

“Circlesong” concert 20 April 2024



A concert featuring Bob Chilcott's *Circlesong* and *Walking the Red Road* plus other performed by Scunthorpe Cooperative Junior Choir.

Both Chilcott works have links in the life of Native American peoples. *Circlesong* – the major work - presents a complete life cycle based on Native American writings. Each of the thirteen movements focuses on a different stage of life, from birth and childhood through manhood and middle age to death. *Walking the Red Road* takes its theme from the Indian Red Road which is a metaphor for living a spiritual way of life.

Harrogate Choral were joined by Backbeat Percussion, pianists Thomas Moore and Anthony Gray and the Scunthorpe Co-operative Junior Choir for a concert including energetic percussion accompaniment, climactic moments, tender unaccompanied passages and a variety of music!!

Paul Jackson, HCS Co-Chair writes...

“The combination of the percussive excitement of Backbeat, the rich harmonies of the choir and the delicate finishing brushstrokes of the children’s soaring voices in the glorious surroundings of St. Wilfrid’s was exquisite and emotional. A feast of a concert.

The main work - Bob Chilcott’s ‘Circlesong’ was not just loved by those performing and those listening. It felt from our early rehearsals in the depth of winter onwards to be a coming together of our precious choir and its members. The wonderful pulse of the music became ours; the harmony reflected our growing unity.

It has been a memorable time for all of us. We feel so very fortunate to have been part of it. This music will stay with us all.

Huge thanks as ever to our dear choir friend and exceptional photographer Ernesto Rogata for these glorious photographs. Congratulations and gratitude to Backbeat Percussion and Scunthorpe Cooperative Junior Choir for a super performance. Just look at the concentration on the children's faces looking up at David Lawrence Conductor.

Thank you to all the organisers and helpers of which there are many.

Members of the choir have commented that there is such a great feeling of community and belonging. Circlesong has brought us all closer than ever and we feel so very privileged to sing in our choir.

Thank you, Bob Chilcott, for this stunning and emotional work of genius.”



The concert opened with Backbeat Percussion performing *Okavango* by Damien Harron, one of their players, then Harrogate Choral Society conducted by HCS Music Director David Lawrence sang *Walking the Red Road* by Bob Chilcott, followed by more Backbeat Percussion this time playing Damien Harron's *Gear Train*.

Then it was the turn of Scunthorpe Co-operative Junior Choir, Conducted by their Music Director Daniel Fields with Accompanist Lynn Robinson (and some support from Backbeat Percussion). Their set comprised Sing *Jubilate Deo* by Jerry Estes; *Our Voice* by Bob Chilcott which was a SCJC Centenary Commission from 2023; *Butterflies & Moths* from Andrew Carter's *Benedicite*; *Johnnie Cope* by Ken Johnstone; *Child of Tomorrow* by Mark Patterson; *Amani Utupe* by Patsy Ford Simms; and finally *Feel Good* by L. Craig Tyson and Leonard Scott.

After the interval all performers presented the title piece *Circlesong* by Bob Chilcott.

Audience comments included: -

“A truly wonderful concert, audience engaged throughout, thank you to all who performed.”

“Thank you to all of you for an unforgettable afternoon of beautiful music and fabulous singing.”

“We enjoyed a very memorable afternoon in St Wilfred's Church last Saturday and I feel it appropriate to say what a pleasure it was to attend. We have been to other choir performances before but none quite as enjoyable as a this. The afternoon started with Backbeat drums and then the nine choral offerings by the Scunthorpe Junior Choir in their 101st year. I noted that whatever they were singing there were no notes, no musical aide memoir so everything had to be learned by heart. I have no idea how many rehearsals the choir had with the Harrogate Choir but I suspect only one in the morning, but they were able to deliver a perfect result. The rest of the afternoon was devoted to a beautiful rendition of Bob Chilcott *Circlesong* with memorable performances by the two pianists and Backbeat drums. Overall, a performance worthy of a much larger audience in the Royal Hall for example and a performance that we will remember for a long time.”

“Wonderful Concert, I had shivers down my spine.”

CIRCLESONG REHEARSAL DAY WITH BOB CHILCOTT



HCS SOPRANO'S WELCOME ANA FROM PORTUGAL



In 2011 I finally listened to my passion for singing and joined a choir called Ad Libitum in my hometown Coimbra, in Portugal. I remember vividly the first rehearsal. I sat in the small room where we rehearsed, after my audition where I had just found out I was a soprano, feeling a bit nervous while trying to learn my part in a piece we were singing and that I'd never heard before. The moment came to sing together with the other voice parts for the first time and when everyone started singing, I was paralysed! Suddenly the ensemble of all the voices coming together was absolutely incredible and my brain was listening in awe! When I was finally able to join in, it felt a bit like something magical was happening right there. This was when I forged my passion for choir singing.

Ad Libitum was quite a small choir, we were about 10/15 people and our choir director or maestra, Isilda Margarida, was really passionate about vocal training. We sang mostly sacred music and sang at a range of different venues and events such as churches, schools, weddings and would sometimes sing together with our children's choir Cherubini Ad Libitum. One of our biggest projects during the time I was in the choir was a piece by Portuguese composer Carlos Seixas at the Conservatoire of Coimbra, where we sang accompanied by a Harpsichord.

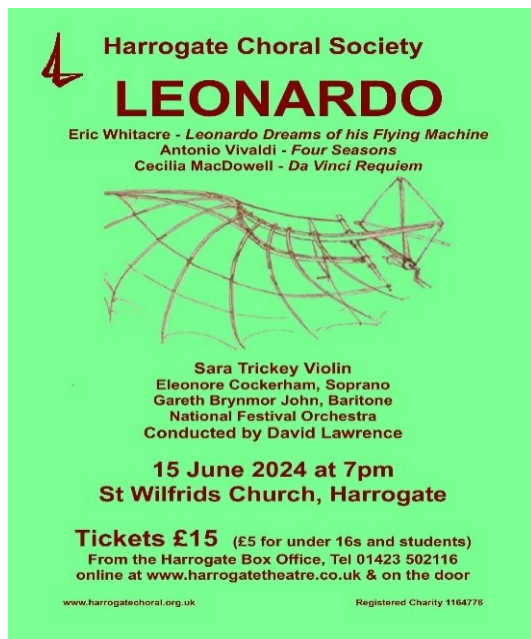


My life's path brought me to the UK in 2014 and becoming a mother led me to be so busy that I never searched for another choir until now.

I've been so well received at Harrogate Choral Society, everyone is so friendly and the rehearsals are filled with such a light and fun atmosphere making them the highlight of my week. This choir is much bigger than Ad Libitum, so the experience of singing has been quite different, but the power of so many voices singing together is absolutely astounding. I feel really fortunate to have joined them and I'm quite excited about our new Leonardo concert!

Ana Reis Raposo

OUR NEXT TWO CONCERTS

A green poster for the Harrogate Choral Society's 'LEONARDO' concert. It features a red line-art drawing of a flying machine. The text includes the society's name, the concert title, composers (Eric Whitacre, Antonio Vivaldi, Cecilia MacDowell), soloists (Sara Trickey, Eleonore Cockerham, Gareth Brynmor John), and the National Festival Orchestra conducted by David Lawrence. The concert is on 15 June 2024 at 7pm at St Wilfrids Church, Harrogate. Tickets are £15, with a link to the Harrogate Theatre website for more information.

Harrogate Choral Society
LEONARDO
Eric Whitacre - *Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine*
Antonio Vivaldi - *Four Seasons*
Cecilia MacDowell - *Da Vinci Requiem*

Sara Trickey Violin
Eleonore Cockerham, Soprano
Gareth Brynmor John, Baritone
National Festival Orchestra
Conducted by David Lawrence

15 June 2024 at 7pm
St Wilfrids Church, Harrogate

Tickets £15 (£5 for under 16s and students)
From the Harrogate Box Office, Tel 01423 502116
online at www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk & on the door

www.harrogatechoral.org.uk Registered Charity 1164776

In *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* composer Eric Whitacre and poet Charles Anthony Silvestri aim to conceptualize the sublime thoughts of renaissance genius Leonardo da Vinci, an artist but also a visionary whose mind conceived terrible engines of war such as tanks but also flying machines.

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* is the best known of his works which were a revolution in musical conception.

The final work Cecilia MacDowell's *Da Vinci Requiem* resents an imaginative pairing of extracts from the notebooks of Leonardo da

Vinci with texts from the Latin *Missa pro defunctis*.

Harrogate Choral Society will be joined by soloists Sara Trickey, Violin; Eleonore Cockerham, Soprano and Gareth Brynmor John, Baritone. They will be accompanied by the National Festival Orchestra and conducted by the HCS's Music Director David Lawrence.

Tickets are just £15 and can be bought online here

<https://www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk/events/leonardo/#book>

A poster for the Harrogate Choral Society's November concert. The background is a colorful stained-glass window. The text lists the soloists (Taylor Scott Davis, Rebecca Dale), composers (Taylor Scott Davis, César Franck, Matthew Coleridge), and the National Festival Orchestra conducted by David Lawrence. The concert is on 23 November 2024 at 3pm at St Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate. Tickets are £18, with a link to the Harrogate Theatre website for more information.

Harrogate Choral Society
Taylor Scott Davis
How Can I Keep From Singing
César Franck
Panis Angelicus
Matthew Coleridge
Requiem
Rebecca Dale
Panis Angelicus Reimagined
Taylor Scott Davis
Magnificat
with
The National Festival Orchestra
Conducted by
David Lawrence

St Wilfrid's Church, Harrogate
23 November 2024 at 3pm

Tickets £18 (£5 for under 16s and students)
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In November we return to St Wilfrid's for a concert featuring two works by Taylor Scott Davis – in *How can I keep from Singing* he frames a tune by Robert Lowry and moulds into a dialogue between the voice parts and the accompaniment. His *Magnificat* was premiered by VOCES8 and is a beautiful setting of the story of Mary from youth to being God's chosen one.

Two versions of *Panis Angelicus* and the increasingly well know *Requiem* by Matthew Coleridge complete the programme.

Harrogate Choral Society will once again be joined by the National Festival Orchestra and will be conducted by David Lawrence.

Tickets will be £18 and will be on sale shortly from the Harrogate Box Office www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk

And finally.....you are invited to the AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY
TO BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2024
IN CHRIST CHURCH PARISH CENTRE HALL, 7.00 P.M.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 5 July 2023
& Matters Arising from them
- 3 Music Director's Report
- 4 Deputy Music Director's Report
- 5 Chairman's Report
- 6 Treasurer's Report, including presentation of draft accounts for 2023-24
- 7 Appointment of scrutineers (if necessary)
- 8 Election of Trustees for 2023/2024
- 9 Appointment of Independent Examiners
- 10 Any other Business