



# Hemiola

## St George's Singers

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### ST GEORGE'S SINGERS

#### PRESIDENT:

Brigit Forsyth

#### VICE PRESIDENTS:

Marcus Farnsworth  
Sue Roper  
Mark Rowlinson  
Stephen Threlfall  
Stephen Williams

#### MUSICAL DIRECTOR:

Neil Taylor

#### ASSISTANT MUSICAL DIRECTOR:

Joseph Judge

#### ACCOMPANIST:

Jeffrey Makinson

Registered Charity no 508686

Member of Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies

[www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)

## SPRINGBOARD FOR ST GEORGE'S

SGS began life nearly 60 years ago as a small group of enthusiasts from St George's Church, Poynton. Though we have grown in number and musical stature beyond all recognition since then we have always welcomed the opportunity to participate in the musical life of the village. When in September 2013 we received an invitation to take part in the first Poynton Music Festival the Choir decided that we would not only put on an extra concert for the festival but that we would, by waiving the offer of payment to offset our costs, effectively become one of the festival sponsors.

On 27 September 2014 Poynton Springboard Festival took over the town with 600 musicians at 16 venues performing music for all tastes from rock to classical. Around half of the choir together with Neil, and Tim Kennedy as accompanist, generously gave their time and voices to

present a programme of 'Choral Gems' in the beautifully refurbished church. The programme was chosen to introduce SGS to an audience of 'Poyntoners', opening with *Zadok the Priest* and closing with the 'Hallelujah Chorus', via Purcell, Fauré, Elgar, Will Todd and James MacMillan – and judging from the enthusiastic audience response we certainly won some new friends.

The festival was conceived by Geoff King, the town's mayor, as his year's Mayor's Charity event. As one of the sponsors



Poynton's current mayor, Rebecca Horsman, hands over a cheque for £2,013 to Kathryn Humphreys of the National Eczema Society, with organising committee members and sponsors' representatives

SGS, represented by Jean Eger-ton, were invited to the ceremony on 21 October to present the cheque to The National Eczema Society. The festival organisers expressed their gratitude to SGS and the other sponsors without whose contribution the festival could not have taken place.

## SGS LADIES TAKE TO THE STARS

On Saturday 31 January the ladies of St George's Singers will be appearing at Stockport Town Hall with Stockport Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Holst's *The Planets*.

They will be joining the orchestra in the seventh and final movement of the work, *Neptune (The Mystic)*. A quiet, eerie and unsettling movement, the wordless song of the choir is hypnotic, like a call from a distant planet, bringing the work to a magical ending. It was Vaughan Williams' favourite movement, on whom it had a great influence, and in its time (1915) was regarded as highly innovative.

The programme also includes Vaughan Williams' *English Folksong Suite*, and Strauss's Oboe Concerto, with soloist

Simon Beesley and conductor Matthew Wood.

Tickets are £10, conc £8, tel: 07947 474574, email: [boxoffice@stockportsymphony.co.uk](mailto:boxoffice@stockportsymphony.co.uk) and are available on the door.

**PS Don't forget our carol concert: Saturday 6 December, St George's, Stockport at 7.00 pm. Festive music for all the family!**

## REQUIEM: OUR TRIBUTE FOR THE FALLEN

**Saturday 15 November  
2014, 7.30 pm  
Requiem for the Fallen  
St George's Church,  
Stockport**

**Tickets: £12, £10 conc,  
£2 students  
Tel: 01663 764012  
Email: [tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk](mailto:tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk)  
Online: [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)**

**There will be a display  
about Poynton's history  
during the First World War  
in the church during the  
concert. Many thanks to  
Judy and Sandy Broadbent  
of the Poynton Local  
History Society for their  
help.**

Our autumn concert this year falls at a most significant time for the whole country. Just six days after Remembrance Sunday, on 15 November we will be presenting a concert in commemoration of those who died in the First World War, in this the 100th anniversary year of the outbreak of that most terrible of global tragedies.

This will not be a sombre event however. Our theme for the concert is remembrance and reflection, not sorrow, and in particular the role that music can play in the healing process. As Andrea Millington, SGS Chair says in her programme notes for the concert:

'This concert is the Choir's way of remembering and it is one we can all enjoy through the sharing of beautiful and uplifting music. The message of hope and peace you will hear throughout.'

Amongst the works we will be performing are well known pieces, and some that will be new to the audience – as they were to the Choir.

Douglas Guest, who came from just outside Sheffield, is best known for his composition, *For the fallen*, a setting of one of the verses of Laurence Binyon's famous 1914 poem. It was composed in 1971 for the Remembrance Day service in Westminster Abbey, and is a short but infinitely touching work.

Henry Walford Davies became well known between the wars for his popular BBC radio lectures on music, and he was appointed Master of the King's Music in 1934 following the death of Elgar. When he composed the *Short Requiem* in 1915, 'in sacred memory of all those who have fallen in the war', there being no Anglican requiem service as such, Davies assembled his requiem from various biblical and liturgical texts, including two psalms intoned to traditional Anglican chant. A most unusual work that probably few have heard, but

full of intriguing moments.

We will be singing two settings of

'Justorum Animae' (The Souls of the Righteous), a collect for All Saints' Day with words taken from the apocryphal Book of Wisdom. The modern setting by Geraint Lewis is a composition of great stillness that leaves time for each line of the text to evaporate before starting the next. By contrast, Stanford's setting probably dates from 1892, and is amongst the finest of his choral compositions.

The piece is in three short sections: the outer two contemplative whilst the central section is a vivid depiction of malice – 'Et non tamen illos tormentum malitiae' (there shall no torment or malice touch them).

John Tavener, who recently sadly died, converted to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1977 after which Orthodox theology and liturgical traditions became a major influence on his work. *Funeral Ikos* was written in 1981 when Tavener was 37. It is a serene setting of words which are probably unfamiliar to most of us and which is a simple statement of the reward in Paradise for the Righteous Ones. Much of it is in unison allowing the

full impact of the words to shine through. This sensitive musicality, in which the sounds are almost just an accompaniment to the words, can only have been achieved by an extraordinary composer of deep religious conviction.

Composed in 1912, *Greater love hath no man* is perhaps John Ireland's best known work for the church – in 1986 it was sung at more cathedrals and collegiate churches in the British Isles than

any other anthem – and the combination of treble and baritone solos followed by climactic moments for full choir gives it a rather Victorian feel.

John Rutter's *Requiem* was written in 1985 in memory of the composer's father, and what was conceived as a personal memorial has gone on to become one of John Rutter's most often-performed choral works. With its themes of reflection and consolation, this *Requiem* is a fitting tribute from today's generation to those who died a century ago in our name.

There will also be a couple of readings at the concert, including one from a recent book by the journalist Kate Adie. Well known for her courageous reporting from many of the world's war-torn regions, Kate has recently written a book entitled *Fighting on the Home Front*, and amongst the many stories is one about Lena Ashwell, who organised music, theatrical and other cultural events for the soldiers on the front line throughout the First World War.

No concert of remembrance would be complete without one of the greatest works, Elgar's *Nimrod*, and we're delighted that our accompanist Jeffrey Makinson will be performing it in a special arrangement by William Harris.

In this centenary year of commemoration, we hope you will join us in a few hours peaceful reflection and remembrance, and some inspiring music.

## WAR'S FORGOTTEN COMPOSERS

The poets of WW1 have acquired an almost celebrity status. Books about the war such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *A Farewell to Arms* have become bestsellers. But the work of composers who fought in the trenches has largely been forgotten.

Ivor Gurney and George Butterworth belonged to a generation of composers known as the 'pastoral school' who took their inspiration from rural life in England. Cecil Coles was assistant conductor at the Stuttgart Royal Opera House before he returned to Britain in 1913. All three signed up as young men to fight at the front.

Cecil Coles served as bandmaster with the Queen's Victoria Rifles. One of the most promising musicians of his generation, he was 29 when he was killed near the Somme in 1918. Ivor Gurney served as a signaller and considered himself a composer first and a poet second. Although he survived the war, he succumbed to severe mental problems, and died of tuberculosis at the age of 47, leaving behind a significant body of both music and poetry, much of

it unpublished at his death.

George Butterworth like Ralph Vaughan Williams, was a great collector of English folk songs. He served as Lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry. His settings of poems from *A Shropshire Lad*, A E Housman's most famous work, reflect on mortality and life in rural England. Butterworth actually wrote the music to Housman's poem *The Lads in Their Hundreds* in 1911, before the outbreak of the war. The poem contained the message that in a group of young men there would be a 'few that will carry their looks or their truths to the grave'. Butterworth was 31 when he was killed during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. He became one of the 'lads that will die in their glory and never be old' and was awarded the Military Cross posthumously.

The Great War also had enormous influence on composers who survived, many finding a catharsis in music. Arthur Bliss dedicated his choral symphony *Morning Heroes* to his brother who died in combat. Ralph Vaughan Williams was 41 when the war began and could

have avoided active service, but chose to enlist in the Royal Army Medical Corps. His work *A Pastoral Symphony* was written as an elegy to fallen comrades. And Gustav Holst, whose ill health prevented him from enlisting, wrote *Ode to Death* in response to composer friends who had died in the war, particularly Cecil Coles.

Butterworth, Cole and Gurney shared common attributes and experiences, all possessing an intense, lyrical voice, tragically affected or silenced by the First World War. You only have to listen to Butterworth's haunting setting of *A Shropshire Lad*, Cole's poignant and prophetic orchestral suite *Behind the Lines* or Gurney's *Five Elizabethan Songs* written whilst still a student, to realise what individual, inspired artists they were.

Perhaps as one commentator has said, whilst poets could express their suffering in words that have an immediate appeal, any music composed during the war would have been out of harmony with their surroundings. Their melodies from that time do not linger.



Cecil Coles (1888–1918) and [below] his gravestone in France with the inscription:

*'He was a genius before anything else, and a hero of the first water'*



## FOR THE FALLEN – LAURENCE BINYON

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,  
England mourns for her dead across the sea.  
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,  
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal  
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.  
There is music in the midst of desolation  
And a glow that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were  
young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds un-  
counted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow  
old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades  
again;  
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;  
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;  
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes pro-  
found,  
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,  
To the innermost heart of their own land they  
are known  
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,  
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,  
As the stars that are starry in the time of our dark-  
ness,  
To the end, to the end, they remain.





## BEST OF THE SUMMER WINE



McGonagall spot – this year with especial significance in view of our recent trip to Edinburgh, but sadly no more poetically beautiful than on previous occasions.

Kate Fuggle and Vicky Sunderland gave a lovely

duet, and Vicky also presented the Choir with a charming card from the pupils at Bradshaw Hall Primary School, thanking us for inviting them to take part in *Zimbe!*

On to the sopranos next, and Jennie Nichol and Sue Sawyer performed the wonderful *Duetto buffo di due gatti* ('Two Cats' duet to the rest of us) by Rossini, complete with ears. Absolutely wonderful, ladies!

a backing group that clearly should have stayed even further back, this was yet another triumph for our award-winning playwright.

After the laughter had died down, Gillian Banks sang a



lovely Strauss song, followed by a group of ladies who took it upon themselves to re-write Britten. As they were all wearing red roses attached to bits of their clothing, we figured it was something about ...?

In slightly more somber vein, Ann Young read a very moving poem, before we came to the traditional end to the social evening and Dave's *magnum opus*. This year he had written a tribute to Howard (Goodall) which

brought tears to the eyes of everyone (especially Neil, who was sitting closest).

So, another social evening, another season over. Lots of fun, laughter, and brilliant music-making with friends. Makes life worthwhile!

Was this year's Social Evening a vintage year? Well, based on the quality of the performances, not really – but then, the enthusiasm and commitment shown by performers and audience alike always makes up for any shortfall in vocal and musical technique!

As usual, SGS choir members and guests gathered in St George's Church hall on the Tuesday after the final concert of the 2013/14 season. Everyone brought their own drinks, and also provided something to eat to go on the buffet table. It never ceases to amaze that out of this culinary chaos, we always manage to get a balanced selection of salads, cooked foods, meat and vegetarian options, as well as scrumptious desserts.

And so to the entertainment.

There were lots of people willing to submit themselves to ritual humiliation this year, and first up were the second altos, who gave a spirited performance of a specially written setting of *We are the very model of a second alto section*, to a tune which will be obvious to all

G&S aficionados. (A plea to Chair Andrea to get them an early spot before they'd drunk too much was fortunately heeded!)

Onto more sedate matters, and Michael Calaam's traditional



A social evening wouldn't be complete without an Eric Northey Production, and this year he had savaged a Simon & Garfunkel classic to create a senior citizen's masterpiece: *Care Home Bound*. With guitar accompaniment from Mel, and

**CHOIR BALANCE IS OFF?**



Some Friends of St George's, clearly not sure whether to laugh or cry





## ZIMBE – THE NIGHT WE ROCKED THE MONASTERY



Look carefully at the photo above. Then look at the photo at the bottom right. Notice anything different? What could possibly have turned a thoroughly respectable, smartly dressed and well-tuned choir into this rabble in the space of an hour? Zimbe, of course!

The first half of the concert was the St George's Singers everyone knows. The beautiful Tippett *Five Spirituals* was followed by the newly commissioned work from Will Todd, *Footprints*, a repeat performance following its premiere at RNCM earlier in the year.



Our last concert in June at the Monastery was a rousing, noisy and colourful affair that hit the right note with the packed audience. Joined by the Call Me Al jazz quintet, and the wonderful pupils of Bradshaw Hall Primary School, St George's put aside their scores, let down their hair and got into the music of Africa.

The serenity generated in the first half was shattered however when the Choir came out after the interval. Instead of our usual sober black (albeit with a red splash), everyone had changed into vivid Africa-inspired red, orange, green and yellow. The children and the musicians sported 'official' Zimbe T-shirts, whilst Neil displayed his usual sartorial flair by wearing his Zimbe shirt backwards – so the audience could get the full impact!

During the afternoon rehearsal, Alexander L'Estrange, the composer of the piece, and leader of the Call Me Al Quintet, had been giving adults and children various performance tips: what gestures to make (rude or otherwise!), what expressions to adopt, how to move in time to the music (starting of course on the right – or was it the left? – foot).

Amidst the joy and fun of Zimbe however, we also had time

to think about the less happy side of Africa. Gerry Hambridge of Poynton came along to the concert and made a plea for contributions to help a school in Uganda that she has been working with for some years. The response from the audience was overwhelming, and Gerry raised over £500 for St James School.

A special mention must be made of the children from Bradshaw Hall. Led with enthusiasm by their teacher, Vicky Sunderland, they responded to



Gerry Hambridge



The children practising their 'gestures' – not to be tried out at home!

every instruction from Neil without hesitating, chattering or complaining. (Basses, take note!)

A rousing end to the season then, and a wonderful opportunity to try something out of our 'comfort zone'. An opportunity we, and the audience, all thoroughly enjoyed.



Many thanks to Graham North and Bill Lionheart for giving permission to use their photos





## SOUTHWELL MUSIC FESTIVAL

BY SUSAN HODGSON AND JULIA MAYALL



Marcus in a quiet moment in the nave of the Minster before the inaugural event

*'Once in a while, life throws up an event so special that those who were there will for ever remember it with deep affection; and, in attempting to convey the elemental joy of the occasion to those who were not, can only say "you should have been there".'*

*Marcus Farnsworth*

There are so many music festivals in Britain during the summer, it's sometimes hard to choose which one to go to. This year, however, the choice for a group of eight SGS members was easy – it had to be Southwell!

2014 saw the inauguration of a brand new festival in the lovely market town of Southwell in Nottinghamshire. It was the brainchild of SGS vice-president, Marcus Farnsworth, who comes from Southwell, and was a chorister in the Minster before heading to Manchester University. He had always thought that the very special acoustic and architectural qualities of the Minster made it the ideal venue for a music festival, and decided, with typical Farnsworth 'can-do' attitude, that he would organize one for his home town.

So for the last two years, in between his rapidly increasing recital and opera engagements in the UK, Europe and Australia, Marcus and the most amazing group of dedicated volunteers put together a festival that finally took place over August Bank Holiday weekend.

There were so many highlights, it's hard to select just one or two. The festival got off to a



The Dean's Residence, venue for the Friends' Reception

brilliant start on the Friday with a free concert of solo and chamber music in the Minster. Then in the evening, the 'main event' was a chamber concert featuring Mendelssohn's Octet in the beautiful and recently renovated State Chamber (where Cardinal Wolsey used to entertain visitors in his role as Archbishop of York). The limited seating in the venue resulted in disappointment for many would-be audience members, so Marcus and the team decided to put on an extra concert. What to put in it? Fortunately Marcus had gathered together an amazing group of professional musicians as Festival artists, so quick phone calls rapidly put together a programme: Gabrieli, Palestrina, Morley and Dowland in the first half, and a repeat of the Mendelssohn in the second half – meaning that the ensemble had to rush off-stage in the State Chamber, down the high

street, and up the stairs to the Old Theatre Deli (where Byron had once trod the boards in amateur theatricals) for their second performance. The stage

was so tiny there was no room for chairs, so with the exception of the cellists, they all stood up throughout the performance – and were obviously having just as much of a ball as the audience were. It may not have been as elegant and sophisticated as the 'main event' but it was delightful-



Southwell Minster

ly informal and enjoyable – and

included a brilliant picnic supper!

But Friday wasn't over. A late night concert by candlelight in the Minster was a must for all choral aficionados: Whitacre, Copland, MacMillan and Jonathan Dove's *Seek him that maketh the seven stars*. Yummy!

Hopes for a lie in the next morning were dashed when we had to get up for the Masterclass, featuring some of the Nottinghamshire region's brightest young musical talents,

**You can keep in touch with Southwell Music Festival at [www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk](http://www.southwellmusicfestival.co.uk)**

Creation rehearsal





tutored by leading professional musicians.

A bit of a breather (though some hardy souls went off to listen to some of the many Fringe events, or take a walk round the Southwell Artists Trail), then on to a great Italian restaurant for dinner, before getting ready for the Festival's main event: Haydn's *Creation*. Conducted by Marcus himself, the performance featured three of the UK's leading young soloists: soprano Sophie Bevan, bass Andrew Forster-Williams (who sang with SGS in the *St Matthew Passion* in 2006) and Andrew Staples (who sang with

The fact that the entire audience at the Minster spontaneously stood up to applaud said it all.

Onto Sunday, and after a glorious Sung Eucharist in the Minster, the Friends of Southwell Music Festival were invited to a magnificent reception in the Dean's Residence. Anne and Dave Francis had been asked by Marcus to be Friends' Coordinators, and ticked us all off as we arrived. Andrew Staples took time off from singing to take some great photos and an army of wonderful volunteer chefs provided a sumptuous buffet lunch. There's nothing quite like sitting in the Dean's



Marcus rehearsing the Festival Orchestra

Williams, Ned Rorem, and a wonderful piece of chamber music by Elgar.

And yet, it still wasn't over! Early Monday morning, and back to the State Chamber where we all got to do our bit for the Festival: Come and Sing Haydn's *Mass in Time of War*. Conductor Marcus applauded and berated us all in equal measure. (You think Neil's hot on stamping out errant 's's' at the end of words? You should hear MF!) After just under three hours rehearsal, we were on stage in the Minster. The amateur choir was 'enhanced' with some of the professional Festival Chorus members (though we like to think we'd have made a good fist of it on our own). Four fabulous soloists joined in at the appropriate spots, and everyone had a wonderful time.

As a festival, this had everything. Good weather (with the odd, bracing shower!), musical horizons stretched by familiar and loved works alongside pieces never heard before, interesting Fringe events, making new friends with people with a shared love of music, discovering fascinating histories and places, and above all, great music.

There only remains to echo Marcus's feelings: You should have been there.

So, what are you doing next August Bank Holiday?



Anne Francis with SMF Director, Ruth Massey

**Andy Staples is not just a great singer – he's also a talented photographer, and took all the photos for the Festival. See his work on [www.ajrstaples.com](http://www.ajrstaples.com)**



Rehearsal in the State Chamber for the Mendelssohn Octet - with Cardinal Wolsey keeping a stern eye on proceedings

us in the *St John Passion* in 2011). According to Hugh Canning, music critic of *The Sunday Times*, this was 'a performance that would have graced any London venue'. And we couldn't agree more. Every second of this performance was spellbinding. A heady mix of ultra-stylish interpretation, top class performances from soloists, chorus and orchestra alike made for one of the most outstanding performances of *Creation* to date.

garden on a summer's day, sipping champagne ...!

But back to the music. Choral

Some of the world's leading chamber orchestral players dashing down the High Street in Southwell to their next gig!



Evensong in the Minster, or a walk in the country around Southwell, along the Civil War Trail (King Charles I was captured in Southwell), then the final concert of the Festival in the State Chamber, a song recital with works by Gurney, Vaughan

Some of the SMF Friends: Geoff and Sue Taylor and Julia Mayall at the Friends' Reception





## WHY MÜNSTER? BY PAM CRAIG AND GEOFF TAYLOR



St Lambert church in the centre of Münster

The choir tour next year, from 22– 25 May, will be to Münster in North Germany, one of the most beautiful and historic towns in Germany.

Much of the old centre is pedestrianised. The 50,000 students, the many pavement cafés and bars, and more bikes per person

than any other town in Germany give the city an individual and buzzing atmosphere. Sunny and warm weather has been ordered, and sitting at a pavement bar with a *Hugo* – sparkling wine, elderflower cordial and mint on ice – watching the life of the city go by is recommended.

Many of you will remember Christian Fröhlich, a member of St George's Singers from 2005–2007. He suggested Münster as a suitable tour venue. More importantly he offered to help in the organisation of the tour. Geoff Taylor and Pam Craig, the tour organisers, have

found it invaluable to have a local colleague for advice on venues, hotels and transport etc. He has also liaised with the venues which has meant that we do not need to use a specialist agent, so the tour will cost less than it would otherwise have done.

We shall fly out on Friday evening from Manchester to Düsseldorf and then travel on to Mün-

ster. Our hotel is close to the city centre, and we can walk to our Münster concert venues.

Venues have been chosen for their acoustic qualities, and organs as well as their beauty and historic interest. We shall clearly not be able to use music from our March or June concerts for this tour and Neil is already planning programmes. We plan to sing in St Lambert in the city centre, hopefully with a local brass ensemble. The church is noted for the metal cages dangling from the tower into which Anabaptists rebels were put to die! We shall



The Astronomical Clock in Münster Cathedral

also sing in the Petrikirche, the University church. In 1648 the peace treaty ending the disastrous 30-year war was signed in the City Rathaus (Town Hall) and we shall have a guided tour of the historic building as well as singing there. There will be opportunities for local sightseeing – the Cathedral, and several other churches, the busy Saturday morning market, and an open-top bus tour are all recommended.

We hope to give our final concert in Roxel, a town a few miles from Münster, which does not have choral concerts as often as the city centre churches. We plan to have our

tour dinner there too. We shall be in the middle of the *spärgel* season. This delicious thick white asparagus is enormously popular in Germany and features on all menus in the season.

We end our tour by travelling to Cologne on the Monday morning. We have been given permission to give an informal recital in the famous *Dom* (cathedral). Neil performed there with his Sheffield Cathedral choir ten years ago, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The rest of the afternoon will be for sightseeing before we

make the short journey back to Düsseldorf airport for an evening return flight.

Pam expects flight schedules to be released in early November and we shall then be able to estimate the cost of the tour and distribute further details and application forms. At

that stage we shall need a £50 deposit.

This Spring Bank Holiday tour (also Whitsun next year) promises to be full of interest, great musical experiences, super sights, but also happy holiday making. We hope many of you will want to participate.

Baptists beware!



Petrikirche





## SO MUCH MUSIC, SO MANY MEMORIES

Choir (and audience) members probably don't take much notice of the list of St George's Singers that appears in concert programmes – except when new members check to make

sure their names are spelled correctly! However, take a close look at the list next time and you'll see a number of hieroglyphs that always appear next to a few names. For those members,

they're very special marks, as they signal the many years of service they've given to the choir.

Currently, we have five Singers with 30 years service (Susan Bayley, Jean Egerton, Phil Newby and Ann Young – a former Chair of SGS) and one, Connie Jones, the proud recipient of a 40-year award.

'Being a member of this choir has been one of the great joys of my life', says Connie. 'When I joined St George's (no auditions then!) Duncan Eyre was the conductor, and I have heard the choir grow and progress from Duncan to Ray Lomax, Stephen Williams and now Neil. There were two other conductors, neither of whom stayed long. With one of them was the only time I can remember a concert being cancelled because we weren't ready!'

Jean also remembers the early years as being less than musically demanding. She moved to Poynton in 1976, and 'was delighted to find St George's Singers on my doorstep and joined at the start of the 78-79 season. The standard of the choir then was very far from what it is now for which on reflection I am exceedingly grateful as I found it quite challenging enough as still very much a choral novice with little formal musical education. I remember literally quaking with fear at

every performance for years, not always just because of my own inadequacies but on behalf of the choir as a whole whose grasp of the music was often, shall we say, a little insecure,

and orchestras and soloists did not always enhance the performance. However those valuable years under conductor Duncan Eyre gave me time to begin to sight read so that when the choir began to grow in stature under a series of increasingly

professional conductors with more ambitious music I was just about able to cope and gradually to be able to approach our concerts with excited anticipation.'

Phil joined St Georges because she wanted to get back to choral singing, having really enjoyed singing in her school choir (who won the Youth Choir competition at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 1971!). She remembers her first rehearsal well. 'I joined in September 1983. "Hello, I'm Jane Eyre" was the greeting I received on my first night from the wife of the musical director, Duncan Eyre. We had an awful uniform. We were given a front and back piece of material (bright green sacking) vaguely cut in the shape of a sleeveless pinafore dress and we just had to sew the shoulders and sides, resulting in a shapeless dress, underneath which we wore a plain white shirt-blouse. But the choir has improved significantly over the years because of the quality of some enormously gifted and inspirational musical directors such as Ray, Stephen and now Neil.'

Everyone of course has their favourite concert moments. 'Singing *Locus Iste* in the salt chapel at the bottom of the Wielicka Salt mine in Poland,

singing Gorecki's *Totus Tuus* in Krakow and seeing members of the congregation fall to their knees in devotion as we sang, and singing the *Cradle Songs* by Veljo Tormis with the composer present, on a beautiful day in a tiny chapel in a meadow in the countryside of Estonia' are amongst Connie's highlights. 'We can never forget our first performance at the Bridgewater Hall, our hugely successful *Elijah* with Willard White conducted by Stephen, and now to Neil Taylor, from whom I have learnt so much through his teaching, training and conducting. His directing us in the St John Passion has been one of my all-time highlights, both musically and spiritually. And Stanford's *Blue Bird* is for me the most perfect small piece we have sung – I almost could have wished to be a soprano!'

*Elijah* is a highlight for many, as is *Locus Iste*, Fanshawe's *African Sanctus* in 1989 and the appearance at the Clonter Opera with Ray ('frozen feet from standing for what felt like hours on icy cold flagstones and then trying to sing while shivering uncontrollably'). For Jean, 'The first concert I remember experiencing as a thrill rather than a terror was Bach's *B Minor Mass* with Stephen at the RNCM in 1998. I was fascinated to watch Stephen's physical interpretation of the music through his gestures and the expressive movement of the orchestral players. It was the first time I heard a countertenor voice and was blown away by its beauty.'

There are also a few lowlights of course. Connie recalls that, 'Handel's *Israel in Egypt* is wonderfully descriptive music but not when the Egyptians sink to the bottom "like a stone"!'

The final word is with our longest-serving member, Connie: 'There are so many concerts and pieces of music I have been privileged to sing with St George's, and so many friends I have made that I will just say to Neil, Jeff and all the Singers, in the words of ABBA – Thank you for the music.'



Ann at the 2014 social evening



Connie and Jean at the Monastery



Phil, stalwart of the first altos

Susan, our longest serving soprano



## CORO INTERMEZZO BY GEOFF TAYLOR



Outdoor performance at Lyme Park

What makes a good choir great? It's not just the quality of the singing, intonation, balance, clarity of text and responsiveness to direction. It's not just imaginative and innovative programming and readiness to leave the comfort zone. It's not just the years of friendship and shared experiences. No – it's the willingness to embark on new experiences, and the readiness and generosity to join in new ventures.



The hosts

So it was that St George's Singers were able to arrange a mini tour in Manchester in early July for Coro Intermezzo, a young choir from Costa Rica, and enjoy their company for four days. This was only possible thanks to a generous grant that the choir enthusiastically made to help with the expenses of this visit, and to the willing volunteers who welcomed them into their homes and ferried them around.

Having made history by becoming the first choir from Costa Rica to pass the stringent audition procedures to compete at the prestigious Llangollen Inter-

national Music Eisteddfod they wanted some pre-competition experience, and wanted to make their transatlantic journey more worth-

while. David and Josué Ramirez, Director and Accompanist of the choir, and Gilbert Aquino, President and photographer, who visited Poynton with El Café Chorale in 2005, wanted to renew friendships in St George's Singers. Anne and Dave Francis and Sue and Geoff Taylor, who visited Costa Rica after the visit of El Café Chorale, and enjoyed Costa Rican scenery and hospitality, volunteered to make the arrangements.

We and the other hosts met our guests at Manchester airport on Friday evening. The next morning they recovered from jet lag, and were then brought to Disley where Sue, assisted by several SGS friends, laid on lunch for 40 people. They then walked into Lyme Park where they gave their first performance, an informal recital of folk music in the splendid gardens. Thanks to Sue Sawyer, they were then given a guided tour of Lyme Hall. All the girls knew about the significance of the lake (and fortunately the huge comic statue of Darcy had been removed!) Then off to Poynton to rehearse for our joint concert where they performed their whole programme – a first half of beautiful sacred music from Tal-

lis to the 21st century. We were especially bowled over by *O Lux Beata Trinitas* by Matsushita, and *Cantus Gloriosus* by Swider. St George's then sang some favourites, and they in turn were bowled over by those glorious opening

chords of *O Thou the Central Orb*. Coro Intermezzo then returned in colourful national costume (we weren't sure about the men's hats!) and gave a stunning performance of central and Latin American folk music. The two choirs then joined together for a spirited rendition of *Caña Dulce* conducted by David Ramirez.

The Costa Rican soccer team had also made history that week, reaching the quarter-finals of the World Cup for the first time. Football fever was rife in Costa Rica and we felt we had to make arrangements for them to watch the match



Singing in the dugout at Old Trafford

against the Netherlands. This unfortunately involved cutting the concert short and negotiating with the church and the TV Licensing Authority! Thanks to Phil and Jean Egerton the match was shown on a large screen. The singers were delighted, but it was not quite the social occasion we had planned, especially as the game

At the Royal Exchange: a tricky folklore movement performed in formal dress and high heels. Don't try this at home!



Leaving for Llangollen







Manchester Cathedral recital

went to extra time, and then penalties, beyond the time when we should have left the hall – and they lost!

On Sunday, after a walk from the Roman lakes and a picnic, arranged by Dave and Anne, they walked to Mellor Parish Centre where Meg and Mike Barley had facilitated a concert. A large, knowledgeable and

After a Chinese lunch they took the tram to the city centre. Several SGS members swelled the rather sparse audience for their informal recital of the sacred programme in Manchester Cathedral. The folk programme was given in the

largest theatre foyer in the country – the former Cotton Exchange in the Royal Exchange Theatre. It was well received by a small audience since, oddly, the theatre management decreed that the recital must end by 6.50 pm, just as many of the audience for the theatre start arriving! Their hosts then entertained them for the evening, some in traditional English pubs.



The agony of the World Cup

enthusiastic audience enjoyed the contrasting programme, bought lots of CDs and gave generously to the retiring collection. Unfortunately one of the basses, Felipe, who was unwell, took commitment to the text a bit far and collapsed to the floor during Whiteacre's *Sleep*. He made a full recovery later.

On Monday the singers were taken to Manchester United for the Field of Dreams Stadium Tour arranged by Dave. They were overawed, especially in the dressing room, and gave a spirited performance of *Soy Tico* in the dugout. They spent a lot of time, and money, in the shop, and many members of the choir, and boyfriends, will now be wearing Man United shirts. They were also shown Dave Francis' season ticket seat right under the Directors' seats!

On Tuesday morning we waved their coach off to Llangollen, where half a dozen SGS members joined them later in the week. They were competing in two classes – Folk Choirs and Mixed Choirs. Their folk song

selection, full of choreography, and much more lively and exciting than the other entrants, went down very well with the audience. Unfortunately the expert adjudicators did not agree! The choir was criticised for 'excessive movement which can detract from the quality of the singing' and placed next to last! There were many long mourning faces on the Festival field in the afternoon. The next day, fully recovered and well motivated, they sang the best bits of their sacred programme beautifully, and came second, by a fraction of a point, to a superb Argentinian choir who went on to win 'Choir of the World' – the final Eisteddfod competition between the winners of each section.

They then had to leave Llangollen at 4 am to catch an early flight to Germany where Chris-

tian Fröhlich had arranged several well attended concerts. I followed them, rather later, as they were to sing in Münster, venue for our tour next year, and it was a good opportunity to investigate concert venues and hotels. At the University of Bochum, in a vast circular auditorium with steeply raked seating, they performed their complete programme to an audience of more than 500 (Germans really appreciate choral music) and received a standing ovation. In Münster the following day they sang in St Lamberti to a church packed with an appreciative audience. They shared the concert with a brilliant young brass ensemble, Galaxy, who I hope will be sharing some of our Münster concerts. Since they find it difficult to stop singing, the square outside the church soon resounded to familiar strains and a large crowd collected. Once I had explored Münster, and enjoyed several Hugos (see Münster article) I left for home, but Coro Intermezzo had not finished. They travelled to Mainhausen, a village near Frankfurt about the size of Disley, which supports six choirs, and gave several more concerts before flying back home..

For the vast majority of the choir this was their first visit to Europe, made possible by St George's Singers, a GREAT choir. They will surely remember it for the rest of their lives, and hope to see us in Costa Rica some time.



TV interview at the Eisteddfod



Josué learns the bagpipes

Close second in the Mixed Choirs category



## ST GEORGE'S SINGERS' NEWS



### New singers

Welcome to three new members of the Choir: Judith (alto) and Peter (tenor) Harle, and Jo Pater (alto). We hope you enjoy many years of music-making with St George's.

### Cheshire Consort

Now that Sue Taylor has officially stepped down as Coordinator of Cheshire Consort, we're delighted that Alison McLay has taken on the job. She'll be working with Sue for the next few months to 'learn the ropes' before taking over

officially, but in the meantime, if you are interested in singing with Cheshire Consort, please speak to either Sue or Alison.

### Joe's big day

And talking of Cheshire Consort, Joe's first event as MD of the Consort was a fantastic success. The wedding, on 18 October, was in Brindle, Lancashire, and Joe and the 24-strong choir were joined by organist Elin Rees. The Rector said, 'the choir was exquisite' and following this up with the comment: 'Rutter came alive in Brindle

yesterday'. The bridegroom's father wrote afterwards to Sue: 'A note of sincere thanks for the just marvellous choir contribution to a fantastic service. Your team were just outstanding and we have received compliment after compliment from friends and relatives who like us were swallowed up in the beauty of the music and the performance.'

Well done to all for your hard work and giving up your time. You earned around £600 for the choir!



Ursula returned from her holidays bringing greetings from George's cousin in Toronto, demonstrating that the Canadian side of the family can also do smart outfits.

## GRACE AND ALAN'S MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING BY ALAN SWAIN

Unlike last year's Coffee Morning, which was so hot I had to erect gazebos and umbrellas, this year it was patio heaters for those brave enough to stay outside. Then it started to rain. Despite being squashed into my bungalow, most people managed to sit somewhere and enjoy coffee and home-made

cakes with much conversation as well.

Because of the generosity of our friends, we raised £520 in support of a worthy organisation and enjoyed a pleasant morning at the same time.

Thanks to all who supported the event.

## LIBRARIAN GETS TOUGH

Gwyneth will refer all repeat offenders to the new assistant librarian, Conan

Choir librarian, Gwyneth Pailin, has been getting increasingly annoyed over the last few seasons as a number of members are not returning music on time. In a stern warning to choir members, she writes:



'... the late return of music can result in fines from libraries, and causes me considerable inconvenience and a lot of extra work in chasing up individuals by phone, email and in person, and dealing with lending libraries and external choirs.

'The normal date for giving music in is the Tuesday following a concert. Return dates vary but can be as short as two weeks after the concert. Once the music is returned to me, my

job is not finished. I still have to sort it, check it to ensure markings have been rubbed out, and package it up for the post.

'We will therefore be asking choir members who miss the deadline by three or more days to make a donation of £5 to choir funds to cover fines and any excess postage involved in late return of music.'

You have been warned!



## CONGRATULATIONS TO JEFF

Everyone at St George's is both delighted and devastated to hear that our wonderful accompanist, Jeff Makinson, has a new job – and sadly will have to leave us.

Jeff, who is currently Assistant Organist at Manchester Cathedral, has been appointed Assistant Director of Music at Lincoln Cathedral – the place where he in fact began his professional career as Assistant Organist from 1995 to 1999.

This time round, though, his job at Lincoln promises to be much more challenging. In addition to playing the organ when the Cathedral Organist Colin Walsh is away, he will be directing the Cathedral Girls' Choir as well as taking joint responsibility for the other choirs, plus teaching two days a week at the Minster School, and running the day-to-day

administration of the music department in the Cathedral.

'Lincoln Cathedral has a huge music programme,' says Jeff. 'In addition to the girls and boys choirs, each of which have around 18 members, there are 6 lay clerks, 6 choral scholars and 4 full-time members. The Minster School is massive. So there's lots more teaching involved than I do now, and there'll be a lot of administration. It'll be challenging, but I'm ready for it.'

Whilst he will have to give up his teaching work at Chethams, he will be able to continue and even expand his solo recital career, as the job will give him more flexibility.

Jeff knows his new home fairly well. 'Lincoln is a vibrant city, with a new university, but still retains parts of the Roman and medieval towns.'

The glorious nave of Lincoln Cathedral, which many in the Choir will remember fondly from when we sang Evensong there on the way back from our Suffolk tour – which happened to be Jeff's first tour with us.



And what about the organ (well, we had to ask!) It was built by the great Victorian organ-builder, Father (Henry) Willis, and is recognised as one of the finest organs in Europe. Well-known organists who have played there include Martin Neary, James O'Donnell, Simon Preston and organists from Notre Dame and Cologne cathedrals. (And we must not forget that the most famous of them all, William Byrd, began his career at Lincoln as organist and choirmaster.)

Jeff takes up his new job towards the end of January, which means he will be with St George's for our carol concert, and Singing Day. Fortunately, he is also going to be able to join us for our remaining concerts (Bach *Magnificat* and *Gerontius*), as well as coming on tour with us to Germany.

The timing of the new job couldn't be more tricky though. Just a few weeks after he takes up post, he gets married to Lucy on 27 February at Manchester Cathedral! So, that's a new job, a new home, and marriage, all in a month!

Whilst we'll be sad to see him go, we wish Jeff and Lucy enormous good luck for their future – and hope the good folk of Lincoln know what a great musician they're welcoming back into their city.



Jeff in familiar mode – on tour with SGS in Prague

## WHEN IS A CHOIR NOT A CHOIR?

'Choir' is the only word in the English language that is written 'oir' but pronounced 'ire' [kwɪə]. Why is that?

The word comes from the Old French 'quer' and entered the English language c1300. It meant the part of the church where the choir sings, and by the 14th century had come to mean the singers themselves, and was spelled 'quire' or

'quyre'. In the 17th century the spelling was changed to 'choir' to mirror the Latin ('chorus') and French ('choeur') models – but no one bothered to change the pronunciation, which still reflects the original spelling.

The 'quire' variant is now pretty archaic, but is still retained in a few places. Southwell Minster for example still boasts a 'quire' in the east end of the cathedral

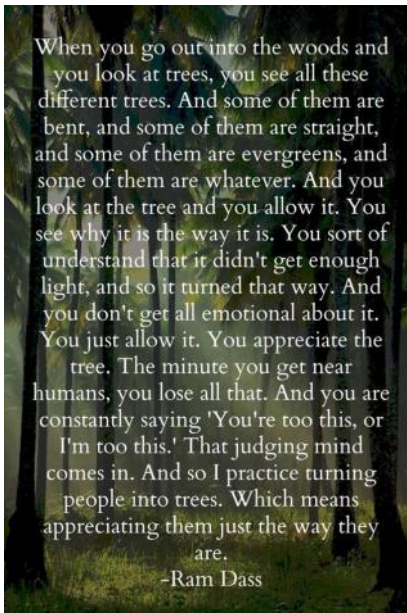
rather than a 'choir'. Publishers know a 'quire' as 25 sheets of paper, or one twentieth of a ream – derived from the old term meaning four sheets of parchment folded to form eight leaves in a mediaeval manuscript.

So, now that everyone is up to speed on the origin of the word, we'll sing much better as a choir!



## A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

### BY SARAH LIONHEART



When you go out into the woods and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent, and some of them are straight, and some of them are evergreens, and some of them are whatever. And you look at the tree and you allow it. You see why it is the way it is. You sort of understand that it didn't get enough light, and so it turned that way. And you don't get all emotional about it. You just allow it. You appreciate the tree. The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying 'You're too this, or I'm too this.' That judging mind comes in. And so I practice turning people into trees. Which means appreciating them just the way they are.

-Ram Dass

I first met Ram Dass [an American spiritual teacher] about 25 years ago and was struck by how he related so openly and sincerely with everyone that he met. I later saw Ruby Wax interview him and she was so respectful towards him which was unusual for her at that time!

This quote about appreciating people just the way they are has helped me a lot in life because we often, without knowing it, want people to be how WE want them to

be and so judge them or are short with them or even ignore them if they do not fit our own views of what people/trees 'should' be like.

One of the things I like about St George's Singers is that we are a very diverse bunch of people brought together by our love of singing and music but we come from very different backgrounds and ages, have a variety of jobs or are retired, have a variety of religious/philosophical views and yet we all practise trying to get along and enjoy each other just as we are. Not all of you can be like me ('thank god!' I might hear some of you say)

and I can't be just like you – but isn't it wonderful how we can meet people so different from ourselves and begin to gain some insight into what it is like to not be all the same?

We have so many different skills and talents and yet when rehearsing and performing we work brilliantly as a team, all giving our best for a common aspiration: to create the best concert we can.

Let's continue to appreciate the variety of 'trees' that we are, the saplings, the oaks, the willows, the aspens, the holly and the ivy... now that reminds me of a song...

## BASKET CASES

### MUSICAL MUSINGS

**Music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order of things, including, and particularly, the co-ordination between man and time.**

*Igor Stravinsky*

**{Basses and tenors - take note!}**

You don't expect to find yourself photographed and interviewed by the press when you go shopping, but Bridget and John Ovey found themselves in *Lancashire Life* on a recent trip to buy John his birthday present in the Lake District.

Local craftsman Owen Jones maintains a centuries-old tradition, making woven wooden baskets called 'swills' using methods that may date back to the Viking era.

For years he was the only person in the country making the rustic containers, and he was awarded an MBE in the New

Years Honours for his services to rural crafts.

On the day Bridget and John visited his workshop, the journalist from *Lancashire Life* was also there, and chatted to them.

Owen sells his baskets in the summer at agri-

cultural and countryside shows, and also runs courses in woodland skills from his workshop.

Each basket is not just an attractive object, but is part of Owen's lifestyle. They are made from oak trunks. Owen takes a log, splits it again and again into thin pieces, then boils them for several hours to make them flexible. They are then torn into long thin strips, which can be woven and then fixed to a hazelwood frame.

Oak swill baskets are traditional to the southern Lake District. Their origins are unclear, but they evolved as a cottage industry which then expanded into a trade in its own right. It is known they were made widely in the Middle Ages, and it is thought they may even be of Viking origin. During the Industrial Revolution there were at least six swill shops making the baskets in Broughton-in-Furness alone, and they were used on farms, in mines and textile mills, by Morecambe Bay cocklers, and in the home for carrying laundry, logs, shop-

ping and even as cradles. Indeed, swills were part of a large coppice wood industry in the oak woods of the Furness fells: the woodsmen delivered oak and hazel to the swill-makers (or 'swillers'). Swills were also widely exported for use as coal-carriers aboard steam ships. Their use declined rapidly in the post-war years as mechanization and plastics took over, however, and now Owen Jones is one of the few who knows and practises the ancient craft.

So, what does John use his swill for? 'Well', he says, 'mine is used for collecting weeds, of which there are plenty in our garden, before consigning them to the green wheelie. The swill sits very comfortably on the hip for carrying purposes. The wonderful gardener at my grandparents' home in the Lake District, whom I used to trail along behind as a child, used them. They are in the blood as far as I'm concerned.'

You can find more information about Owen and his baskets at [www.oakswills.co.uk](http://www.oakswills.co.uk).





## THE NIGHT I DANCED AT THE MOULIN ROUGE

BY SYLVIA JOHNSON

We were invited to go and stay with some friends in Brittany this summer, and we decided to accept. We discussed various ways of getting there, how long to stay with them, and how much time and where to add to the holiday. We decided to drive, so we booked ferries there and back, decided to add Paris to the itinerary so booked train tickets from a city local to their *gîte*, and a hotel in Paris, and decided to stay with the friends for a week before Paris and two or three days after, followed by a slow meander back to the port.

Four weeks before we were leaving, and three days before we were meeting the friends for lunch we were completely devastated to be told by our younger son that he and his wife were parting company after eleven years together, and five years of

marriage. Now is probably the right time to say that the friends with whom we intended to stay were the parents of our daughter-in-law!

I chatted to the in-laws and was told that we were very welcome to still visit, but as there were several other couples staying too, we decided against it. We then had three days to replan the holiday, bearing in mind the things which we couldn't change, so that we could present a plan when we met for lunch. We chose a route, booked hotels and continued to plan our Paris stay.

The whole holiday worked incredibly well, in spite of the worries we had and the sudden change of plans. We did meet the in-laws and their other friends in Dinan and went back to their *gîte* for a meal.

We had some brilliant times, but the memory that will always remain with me is dancing at the Moulin Rouge!

We had booked online for a meal and a show, and I was really looking forward to it. We made sure the tickets were in order in the afternoon and joined the queue at 6.30 pm as instructed. We were shown to our table right next to the stage,

which pleased my better

half, and the couple allocated to the seats next to us soon introduced themselves – Americans called Bob and Mary.

Before the meal there was a small group and two singers providing entertainment. Bob was very insistent that I had to dance with him – I am not and never have been a dancer – and in spite of hearty protests on my part, we took to the dance floor. There were two of us dancing a waltz and 798 people watching! I was very relieved when the music stopped, but seemingly I had impressed another gentleman who insisted that I danced with him. I again tried to decline but he was having none of it. It transpired that he was a professional dancer, a dance teacher and a judge at international competitions! I think my technique improved slightly with him, but the show dancers didn't ask me to join them. I don't think they had a costume to fit me – but I do think they might have missed an opportunity.

My dancing days were short-lived but very memorable.



Sylvia wondered if her costume could be adapted for our next concert

**If anyone is interested in auditioning as a dancer at the Moulin Rouge, the criteria are: women must be at least 5'9", have a slim graceful figure and bright personality; men should be 6'1", have a well-proportioned muscled body and great stage presence. So, pretty representative of SGS then ... Oh, and you have to be able to dance.**

## OUR NEW ONLINE CHARITY SHOP

St George's Singers' online fundraising shop has moved from Spend and Raise to Easyfundraising.

The two organisations have merged to provide a bigger and better service, more retailers, better search functions, more offers and discounts and higher donations from some retailers.

You will find the new shop at **[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)**. You will have to register (free

of charge) and identify the cause you wish to support. To do this:

1. Log on to our charity page at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/st-georges-singers](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/st-georges-singers).
2. Click on 'support our cause'.
3. Complete your personal registration details (just your name and email address).

Then start shopping! Every time you shop through our

charity page the retailer you buy from will make a donation to the Choir. You can also access it from the choir website.

A more detailed guide on how to use the site to maximize our fundraising is being produced, and will be available on the Choir website soon.

This is a tremendous way to raise money for St George's Singers – and does not cost you a penny. What's not to like!



**easyfundraising**  
.org.uk

## St George's Singers

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Find us on the web at:

  [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)

To receive a regular copy of *Hemiola*, complete the Mailing List registration on the website, or contact the Publicity Officer.

St George's Singers was formed in 1956 by Rev Eric Chapman and Geoffrey Verney, organist and choirmaster of St George's Church, Poynton in Cheshire, where the Choir still rehearses every Tuesday night. Geoffrey's dream was to build a community choir, capable of performing major choral works to a high standard and which would attract singers and audiences from neighbouring towns. Geoffrey died in 1964, but his legacy was nurtured by his successors Duncan Eyre, Ray Lomax and Stephen Williams, and is continued by our present Musical Director, Neil Taylor. St George's Singers is now recognised as one of the leading and most innovative choirs in the North West of England, performing an astonishingly varied repertoire, and with around 100 members drawn from an area far beyond the community of Poynton. We present at least four major concerts a year, in venues including The Bridgewater Hall, Gorton Monastery, Manchester Cathedral and Royal Northern College of Music, hold annual Singing Days, and tour regularly in the UK and abroad. St George's Singers continues to explore and expand the boundaries of choral music, and communicating the sheer enjoyment of singing together. Entry to the Choir is via audition, and new members are welcome to come along to rehearsals at any time.

## SINGING DAY 2015

### ST GEORGE'S CONCERT DIARY 2014/15

**15 November 2014, 7.30 pm**  
**Requiem for the Fallen**

**6 December 2014, 7.00 pm**  
**Carols and Brass by Candlelight**

**7 March 2015, 7.30 pm**  
**Bach *Magnificat*, Buxtehude  
*Membra Jesu nostri***

**21 June 2015, 7.30 pm**  
**Elgar *The Dream of Gerontius***

**Ticket Hotline: 01663 764012**  
**[tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk)**

Our Singing Day next January offers a double bill of classical choral music. On Saturday 17 January, Neil will be rehearsing St George's Singers, along with around 160 visiting singers, in Mozart's *Coronation Mass* and Haydn's *Te Deum*.

As usual, there will be a public performance of the two works at the end of the day, and this year all the soloists are making a very welcome return visit to St George's. We all remember soprano Ella Taylor when she sang with us in the Fauré *Requiem*, and performed the beautiful Poulenc songs, *Fiançailles pour rire*. Contralto

Cara Cullen was one of the wonderful soloists last year in the Beethoven; Timothy Langston joined us for the 2013 Singing Day in Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*; and Jonathan Ainscough



sang bass in the Mozart *Requiem* in 2012.

The Singing Day starts with registration at 9.30 am, with the

performance at 6.00 pm. Lunch is available (soup and sandwiches) for £4, whilst tea, coffee and cakes are included in the price of the day – which at £22 is an absolute bargain for a wonderful day's vocal tuition, and a chance to sing two of the great choral classics.

Places on the Singing Day go quickly, so if you know anyone who wants to come along, tell them to book soon. For information and to book a place, email [gillian.m.banks@gmail.com](mailto:gillian.m.banks@gmail.com), tel: 01925 213949, or download a booking form from our website: [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk).

