



Hemiola

St George's Singers

THREE CATHEDRALS TOUR TIM LAMBERT

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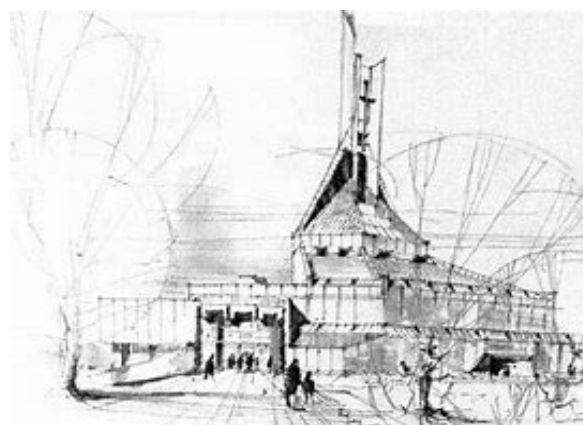
Cathedrals on Film 4

This year, John Smith and I will be leading the Choir Tour in May. Preparations are well underway, helped by the fact most of the work was completed before we were rudely interrupted by the lockdown.

One of the many benefits of the postponement has been that we have additional members joining us; we have a very full coach leaving Poynton on Friday 26 May. Our all day tour rehearsal took place on Saturday 13 May when we romped through the repertoire and built a heady sense of anticipation of singing in three fabulous cathedrals

Clifton Cathedral

Situated in a leafy suburb of Bristol, the Roman Catholic Cathedral Church of SS. Peter and Paul was consecrated in 1973. It has been a Grade II* listed building since 2000.



The original architect's drawings for Clifton Cathedral

Designed in the 'brutalist' style of post-war era of architecture, Clifton is a distinctive building. Ignore the dreary exterior and head inside to see how light and spacious it is, full of hexagons and triangles. Every seat in the building has a good view of the altar.

The Rieger organ is impressive, and it is a wonderful building in which the Choir

will perform both secular and ecclesiastical works during an evening concert.

Bristol Cathedral

Situated at the heart of the city, the oldest parts of the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity date back to the 12th Century. It is the country's only 'hall church'. (The vaulted ceilings in the nave, choir and aisles are all at the same height.) Although it became a cathedral in 1542, it did not have a nave until the 1800s.

The Choir will be taking part in Sung Eucharist and Choral Evensong.

Gloucester Cathedral

Parts of the Cathedral Church of St Peter and the Holy and Indivisible Trinity date all the way back to the 11th century, but it originated with the establishment of an abbey in about 679 AD.

ST GEORGE'S SINGERS

PRESIDENT:

Marcus Farnsworth MA ARAM

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Sasha Johnson Manning
Stephen Threlfall
Stephen Williams

MUSICAL DIRECTOR:

Neil Taylor

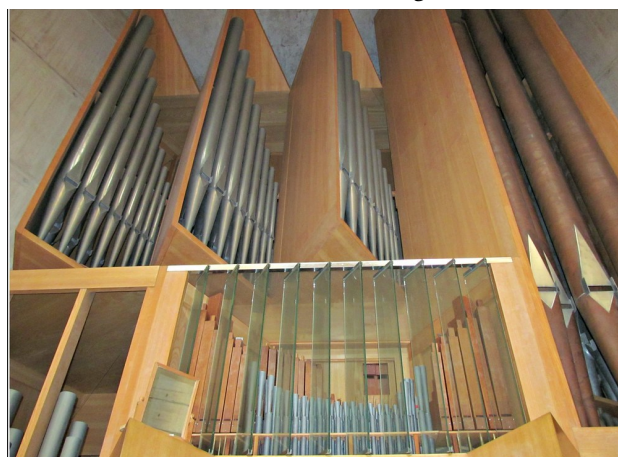
ACCOMPANIST:

Peter Durrant

Registered Charity no 508686

Member of Making Music, the
National Federation of Music
Societies

www.st-georges-singers.org.uk



The design of Clifton Cathedral's Rieger organ reflects the hexagons upon which the Cathedral is based.

Clifton Cathedral

This short YouTube clip is an absolute delight; I encourage you to take 12 and a half minutes to watch, especially if you are coming on tour. A trailer for a DVD made in 2015, it explores the construction of Clifton Cathedral, the people who made it, why it happened at all and what it means.

Clifton Cathedral - A Journey in Faith (Trail) - YouTube

It includes an interview with the architect, William Mitchell, designer and architect of the Stations of the Cross within the cathedral. His work can also be found much closer to home; here are a few examples of his Grade II listed work north of the Cheshire border.

Grade II listed

- 1966 abstract stained glass window at Archbishop Temple School, **Preston**
- 1967 *Minute Men* sculptures at **Salford University**.
- 1967 cold cast bronze sliding doors of the **Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral**.
- Grade II 1968 Sculptural Wall, **London Road, Manchester**.
- Grade Listed 1968 *Story of Wool*/sculptural mural, Wool International Development Centre in **Ilkley**.

THREE CATHEDRALS TOUR TIM LAMBERT

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When the Great East Window was installed in the 1350s, it was the largest in the world; it is the size of a tennis court.

The cathedral is home to the tomb of Edward II, who was murdered nearby at Berkeley



Gloucester Cathedral's organ was originally constructed in 1666 by Thomas Harris. It is the only complete 17th century cathedral organ case surviving in this country.



Bristol Cathedral organ dates back to 1685, having three manuals, nineteen stops and no pedals. Over the centuries more stops and manuals were added and the instrument moved to different locations. In 1989 a complete restoration was undertaken. This old Choir case now houses the Chamber Organ in the Eastern Lady Chapel. It was returned to the cathedral in 1956 having been used as a domestic bookcase.

Castle. The famous organ (sadly currently out of action) sits atop the screen in the middle of the building.

No doubt the Choir will sound magnificent in the huge acoustic when we perform a

lunchtime concert on Bank Holiday Monday.

We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.

Winston Churchill

HALL CHURCHES



The choir in Bristol Cathedral, lit from side windows, leads to the high altar.

The choir in Bristol Cathedral was built in 1298 and is at the heart of the medieval 'hall church'. It is considered one of the most important and origi-

nal works of the medieval era in Europe and is the focal point of the Cathedral, leading up to the high altar.

The original Norman choir was re-built in the 14th century, and the choir stalls were added in the 16th century.

The definition of a hall church is a church with a nave and aisles of approximately equal height, often united under a single immense roof. The term was referenced in the mid-19th century by Wilhelm Lübke, a pioneering German art historian. In contrast to an architectural basilica, where the nave is lit from above, a hall church is lit by the windows of the side walls typically spanning almost the full height of the interior.

We require from buildings two kinds of goodness: first, the doing their practical duty well: then that they be graceful and pleasing in doing it.

John Ruskin

WAR'S EMBERS IN GLOUCESTER

In 2018, a hundred years after the end of the First World War, St George's Singers performed a piece commissioned by the Whittingham Lives project. Sasha Johnson Manning's choral suite *War's Embers* is based on the poetry of Ivor Gurney, a tragic victim of war who spent many years in an asylum.

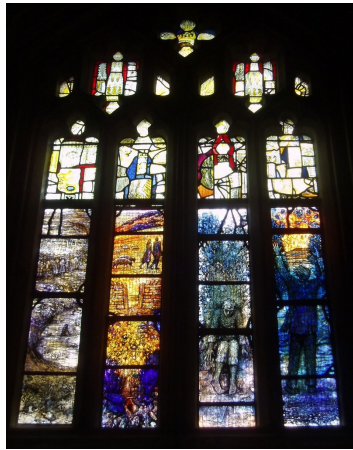
As part of our concert repertoire in Gloucester Cathedral, we will include four of the pieces from this suite, all of which evoke a deep emotional

response for both the singer and listener.



Ivor Gurney was born in Gloucester in 1890. As a boy, he was a chorister at the Cathedral. In 1911, he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music to study composition with Sir Charles Stanford but psychological problems led to a breakdown which interrupted his studies.

During the First World War, Gurney served with the Gloucestershire Regi-



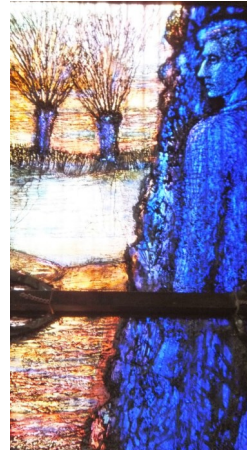
orate the life of one of Gloucestershire's most beloved sons.

The Ivor Gurney window was installed in 2014. Each of the eight window lights is said to draw inspiration from the poet's love of Gloucestershire and its countryside, but also his troubled life.

ment, fighting on the Somme, where he was wounded and gassed. During his time in the trenches, he wrote a number of songs and poems.

After the war, Gurney returned to the Royal College, this time studying with Ralph Vaughan Williams. However, his emotional instability continued and he was confined to a mental institution for the rest of his life.

In 2013, Gloucester Cathedral commissioned the artist Tom Denny to design and create a stained glass window to commem-



Thomas Denny is a stained-glass artist and painter. In the 1980s and 1990s he exhibited his paintings in London and New York.

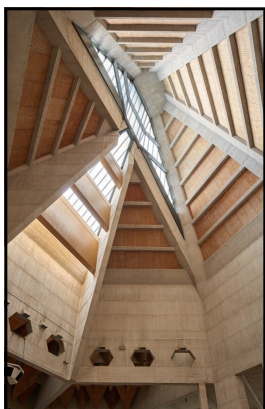
Latterly, Denny has concentrated on stained-glass and has now made some fifty windows for churches and cathedrals, almost entirely in England ... Recent commissions include a pair of windows at Hereford Cathedral and, installed in August 2010, a huge window for Durham Cathedral. Other commissions are found in extraordinary buildings all over the country, including Gloucester Cathedral, Tewkesbury Abbey and Malvern Priory. ...

Anne Wroe, writing in *The Tablet* (2006) ... finds 'hues and images that both feed the soul and take the breath away ... his glass lives and moves like no one else's'.

Any reader interested in seeing more of Tom Denny's work, can follow this link to his website which includes some short films.

<https://www.thomasdenny.co.uk/films>

THE VAULTS OF HEAVEN RESOUND



Separated by over 800 years, the vaulted ceilings in the cathedrals of Clifton, Gloucester and Bristol reflect their respective architects' symbolism of heaven as well as offering an awe inspiring spectacle of extreme height. With as much uninterrupted vertical space as possible in their stone structures, these soaring heights provided a dramatic interior in which to reinforce the power of the Church through the ages.

For a choir, the reverberation and resonance created within these gargantuan spaces can generate an almost out of body experi-

ence, the sound of your collective voices returning, bolder and richer and reaching out to those who have sung before.

SGS Tour Bookends

Our first concert will begin with Hubert Parry's setting of Psalm 122 *I was Glad* (Laetatus Sum). This psalm has been performed at every coronation since that of Charles I in 1626. Parry's most famous setting was premiered in 1953, at Queen Elizabeth II's coronation.

Our last concert will finish with George Frideric Handel's anthem *Zadok the Priest*, written for the coronation of George II in 1727.

If any readers can think of two other pieces more resounding as bookends to a choral tour in three outstanding cathedrals, please contact the editor.

Your place as editor-in-waiting will be assured.

Saturday 17 June 2023, 7.30pm

Ellington *Sacred Concert*

RNCM, Oxford Road, Manchester,

M13 9RD

Ticket Hotline: 01663 764012

tickets@st-georges-singers.org.uk

Those keen Harry Potter fans coming on tour will no doubt be enthralled to visit the corridors of Hogwarts when we perform our final concert at Gloucester Cathedral.

The cloisters of the cathedral featured heavily in the first two Harry Potter films and briefly in the sixth. It acted as the Hogwarts corridors, the Gryffindor common room, Moaning Myrtle's bathroom as well as the opening scene of *Chamber of Secrets*.

All four of the cloisters were used for the filming. The pro-



duction team actually used the same areas for different locations in the films, taking their shots from different angles hoping that the audience would be none the wiser!

Along with other cloisters found around the country, such as Durham Cathedral, Oxford New College and Lacock Abbey, the production team and director created the aura of a labyrinth in which mystery, wizardry and magic dwelt.

On a more cerebral level, Bristol Cathedral was the

site of many scenes in the BBC's 2014 drama *Wolf Hall*. The nave played the role of Westminster Abbey for the coronation of Anne Boleyn. The Chapter House became the office of the Duke of Norfolk and other scenes were filmed in both the Eastern and Elder Lady Chapels.

For those fans of *Wolf Hall* coming on tour, if you have time to spare you can follow a trail through the Cathedral to see the different locations used when filming.



St George's Singers

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Find us on the web at:

www.st-georges-singers.org.uk.

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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 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, The Stoller Hall, 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.