

WELCOME BACK FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Here we are again, just about to begin our next season of wonderful music making. I hope that you have managed to enjoy the summer, even if the weather has been less than ideal. The rain has certainly made my courgettes take over the world, but my tomatoes are desperate for some sun to ripen!

During the summer, a number from the chorus took part in the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester. The programme was different in style to previous years, but as always, it was a joy to be part of the oldest music festival in the world. Next year the Festival will return to Worcester, with Sam as Artistic Director, and me as Worcester City Chair. The programme is exciting, so if you haven't been part of it before, maybe you'd like to audition and become a member of the full Festival Chorus. If you can't commit to the time there is also the unauditioned Festival Voices who perform just one concert.

So, to the next season, I hope that you are looking forward to learning something new as well as re-visiting old friends. Trying to pick a programme is not as easy as it might appear. With a membership of near 150, you cannot please everyone all of the time. When I announced the programme last term, I heard some say "I've sung the Brahms loads, I wish it was something else", at the same time I heard other say "ooh, I love the Brahms, I've never sung it before!" Hopefully we have struck a balance which will work for the next year, and you will all enjoy working towards the three concerts.

Just in case you weren't aware, this is the last introduction I write as Chair of WFCS. At the next AGM I will stand down, and hand over to Sue White. I have known Sue since I was about 6 years old, and we often joke about the fact that I was told off for squeezing John's (her husband's) balls! They use to own a sports shop in Barnt Green, where I grew up, and I used to squeeze the squash balls! Sue has chaired the Worcestershire Federation of the WI, so keeping WFCS in check will be a doddle!

It has been a privilege to chair the Society for the last nine years. I have worked with 3 Directors of music, Dr. Peter Nardone, Chris Allsop and now Sam Hudson. All have brought their own characters to the role, and without their musicality and good humour the Society would not have flourished during my tenure. My biggest thanks, however, go to the committee members, both past and present. The stress of my job has been taken away by such capable people, giving their time and energies to make the Society the success that it is. So, thank you to all the committee members who have worked with me over the years. I have to admit, I am looking forward to my return to 'the back benches!'

Finally, thank you to you, the members. The joy and good humour every Monday evening lifts the spirits, even on the coldest and wettest of January nights. The generosity in kind, helping with orchestra teas and

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the weekly raffle, as well as the generosity of spirit, to help others, whether giving lifts or lending a friendly ear shows how special the Society is. No two choruses are the same, but I like to think we are really rather special, so thank you one and all!

Ben Cooper (B)
Chairman



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CONDUCTOR

I hope you have all had a wonderful summer, and that you are returning with great excitement for the forthcoming WFCS season! There is plenty to be excited about, too. Our autumn concert this year features one of the most popular and luscious romantic choral works in the repertoire, Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (and yes, we'll be singing it in German!), a work full of drama, extremes of emotion, and one encompassing a message of hope for all humanity. How important and relevant that seems to be to our modern world!

We then look forward to our annual performance of another timeless choral masterpiece, Handel's *Messiah*, before turning our attention to the repertoire for our spring concert. This programme combines the *Mass in C* by Beethoven with a contemporary work, Richard Blackford's *Mirror of Perfection*. Some of you will remember performing another of Richard's pieces in the Three Choirs Festival in Hereford in 2022 – Richard is delighted that we will be singing this work, and hopes to be with us for the concert, I think!

I hope this will be a fitting close to a well-balanced season, and that most of all, you will enjoy the music, the fellowship of our weekly meetings to rehearse, and the thrill of performing this amazing repertoire in our beautiful cathedral. I look forward to seeing you all soon!

Samuel Hudson
Director of Music and
Conductor



TREASURER'S REPORT

If you read this DRAFT summary of the society's income and expenditure during the season 2022-2023, you will see that we made a loss on the year's activities of approximately £1580. Had it not been for the legacy of nearly £3400 left to the society by a previous member, the loss would have been approximately £4960. The committee therefore proposes an increase of members' annual subscription to £135. The last time that the subscription rate was increased was in 2013, ten years ago.

I would prefer members to pay their subscriptions online. However, if you do not use online banking, you are still welcome to pay by handing a cheque to me at a rehearsal.

If you can pay online, please quote the WFCS account number 01268312 and sort code 39-99-90 with the

reference of WFCS Sub. Your subscription will cover the whole season, including the hire of music, irrespective of how many concerts you sing in and must be paid by 1 October. However, whilst we encourage everyone to pay the full amount by this date, it will be possible, by prior agreement with the Treasurer, to pay in two instalments, the second being paid by 1st February 2024. The Treasurer can also be approached on an individual basis for a reduced sub in cases of hardship.

Finally, do keep up your efforts in selling tickets to our concerts!



Barbara Ford (A)
Treasurer

A summary of the income and expenditure of WFCS in 2022-23

Concert income

Concert 1 (Sea Symphony/Sea Drift)	7854.27
Concert 2 (Messiah)	11734.02
Concert 3 (Dream of Gerontius)	10603.20
Programme sales and adverts	2947.50

	33138.99
	=====

Concert costs

Artistes' fees (includes orchestra, soloists, conductor, accompanist, rehearsal fees)

Concert 1	20822.00	The difference in the cost of the various concerts is largely due to the different orchestral fees and also the small number of rehearsals for concert 2.
Concert 2	10619.00	
Concert 3	19426.00	
Hire of halls (approx.)	5400.00	
Publicity, programmes etc	5402.38	

	61669.38	

So, **loss on concerts** is 28530.39

Other costs

1865.88 Insurance etc
30396.27
=====

Other income

Members' subscriptions	16582.50	Fundraising Includes profit of 1900 on Come and Sing, a legacy of £3,300 from a previous member, raffle, etc.
Patrons' subscriptions	1640.00	
Fundraising and donations (approx.)	7300.00	
Gift Aid on subscriptions (approx.)	3300.00	

	28822.50	
	=====	

Loss on the year's activities

1573.77
=====

Thank you to Barbara for this report. It clearly shows that achieving a good audience attendance and fundraising are key to maintaining a strong financial position next year and in the future. So, let's all work hard to sell tickets to our concerts and join in fund raising activities. Ed.

COME & SING DAY IS A **SELL-OUT SUCCESS**



We're pleased to report that Worcester Festival Choral Society's annual 'Come & Sing' one-day workshop on Saturday 22 April was a sell-out success, attracting more than 160 amateur singers from around the UK!

As well as raising much-needed funds for our Society, the popular event gave amateur singers of all kinds the chance to learn a major choral blockbuster in just one day: Verdi's epic *Requiem*. Considered to be one of the all-time greats of the classical choral repertoire, the 1839 work includes many spine-tingling moments, including the famous Dies Irae ('Day of Wrath').



Led by Sam Hudson and with piano accompaniment from Worcester Cathedral's organ scholar, Gus Cox, the workshop took place at St Andrew's Methodist Church in Worcester. As well as singing sessions, the day included expert musical insights, vocal tips and an informal concert performance with soloists, which singers' guests could attend free of charge. Singers could also pre-order tasty hot meals, sandwiches and soup laid on by our Social Secretary Sue White and team. A superb range of home-made cakes made by various WFCS members, plus a raffle, raised extra funds.



Sue White confirmed: "This was probably our best-attended Come & Sing workshop to date, and the feedback was excellent. Singers really enjoyed themselves. The sound they made during the informal concert was simply superb!"



Our next Come & Sing workshop is set to take place in Spring 2024. Date and details will be confirmed soon – keep your eyes peeled on our Come & Sing webpage: www.wfcs/online/come-and-sing-events



MARKETING OVERVIEW

As always, marketing efforts to bring our WFCS 2023-24 concerts and the Society itself to the attention of music lovers across the region are already well underway. These activities will continue all season, focusing – as always – on the most effective and affordable choices.

Now more than ever, the help of every chorus member in supporting these efforts is essential to help us get those bums on seats! This includes telling your friends about our concerts, displaying our posters, sharing our materials and getting active on social media (see separate article).

My thanks to Anne Renshaw (S), Jim Norris (T), Leon Joynes (T), Catrin Meredith (S), Sally Rees (S), Alison Riddell (S), Sue White (S) and Claire Horacek (S) who continue to provide particular support to certain aspect of our marketing activities. In addition, it's always useful to know of any Chorus members who have relevant professional skills that we might make use of in the future – so if you have a background in marketing, PR, graphic design, web admin, digital, social media please let me know, or email michelle@whitefootpr.co.uk.

Michelle Whitefoot (S)
Marketing & Publicity Officer



MARKETING ROUND-UP: 2022-23 SEASON	
WEBSITE	Continually updated website www.wfcs.online – including our latest news, concert info & online Box Office
EMAIL MARKETING	'Mailchimp' direct marketing emails to our database of around 1,000, opted-in past ticket purchasers, advising them of concerts
POSTERS	Concert publicity posters in various sizes – printed and PDFs. Available for our November concert very soon. Please take some and put them up around your community. A sign-up list of potential display locations will also be available at rehearsals
'SCENE' DISPLAY RACKS	Concert flyers displayed in 'SCENE' (Direct Publicity) leaflet display units at 50+ key locations across the Worcestershire Arts Network (eg tourist information centres, libraries, museums, galleries, leisure centres, colleges, hotels)
MEDIA RELATIONS	News releases etc to get concert exposure in printed and online regional newspapers, lifestyle mags, local newsletters and 'What's On' titles
ONLINE LISTINGS	Concert listings on 20+ national and local music and event listing websites
SOCIAL MEDIA	Ongoing, year-round posts to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If you use social media please Like/Follow @WorcsChoral and share our posts to help our news spread far and wide! (See separate article)
RADIO	Radio interviews highlighting our concerts
BOOKMARKS	Promotional bookmarks and flyers distributed at like-minded events and concerts. Every Chorus members will also receive 5 x WFCS 2022-23 bookmarks soon – please give them out to music-loving friends, as a year-round reminder of our concert dates
RECIPROCAL ADVERTS	Reciprocal, foc display advertising in concert programmes of various other local music organisations
OUTDOOR BANNERS	Small number of roadside publicity banners placed around in Worcester a couple of weeks before each concert
OTHER	Other WFCS marketing activities during the year include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Printed concert programmes x 3 - Annual Patrons Leaflet - Choral Chronicle e-newsletters x 2 - Photographer support - Liaison with advertisers / sponsors - The WFCS Wikipedia page - Promotion of our Come & Sing workshop - Participation in the annual Worcester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival ... and more!

WFCS ONLINE: **STAY UPDATED YEAR ROUND**

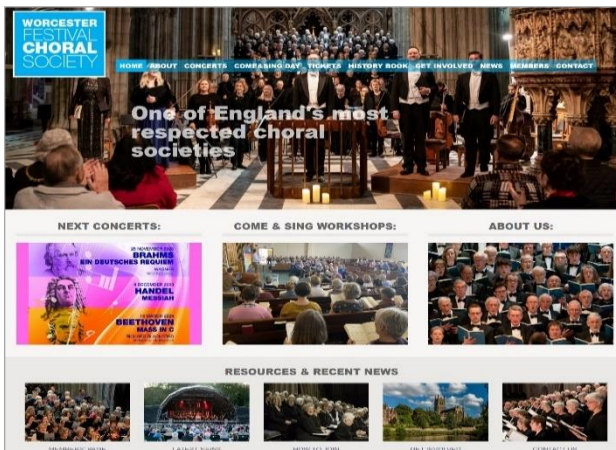
Almost everyone seeks out and shares information online these days! That's why our WFCS website and social media pages are increasingly important for our communications with prospective audience members, supporters, our members and the world in general.

We therefore encourage you, our singers, to visit our website regularly for the latest concert news, tickets and much more. If you use social media, please also Like our Facebook, Twitter (X) and Instagram pages, where you'll find our WFCS news updates, photos and events, plus relevant local music and arts news, special opportunities, funnies and more. Please Like/Share our posts and help spread the word.

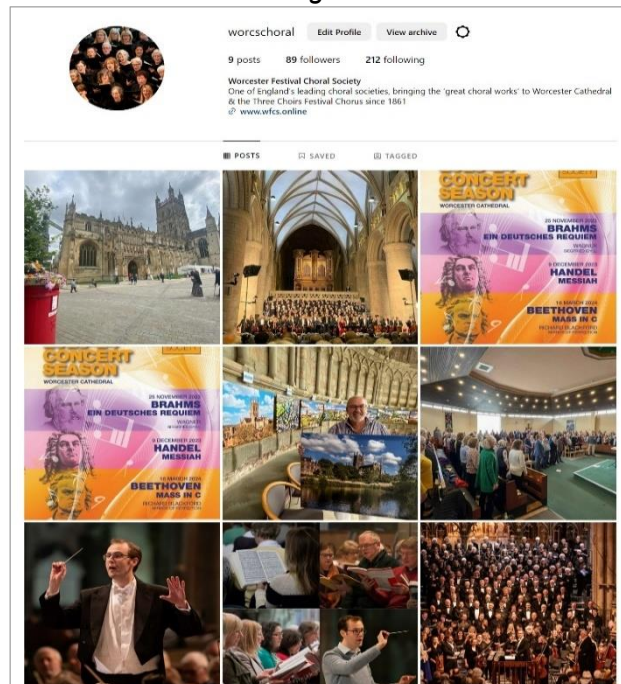
Michelle Whitefoot (S)
Marketing & Publicity Officer



WEBSITE: www.wfcs.online



NEW! INSTAGRAM: [@WorcsChoral](https://www.instagram.com/worcschoral)
(www.instagram.com/worcschoral)
89 followers and counting



TWITTER (X): [@WorcsChoral](https://twitter.com/WorcsChoral)
([www.twitter.com/worcschoral](https://twitter.com/worcschoral))
936 followers and counting



FACEBOOK: [WorcsChoral](https://www.facebook.com/WorcsChoral)
(www.facebook.com/WorcsChoral)
830 followers and counting



HELP TO RAISE FUNDS **FOR WFCS...**

TAKE PART IN THE **100 CLUB**

The WFCS 100 Club is a lottery that offers both members and other supporters of the Choir an easy way to lend ongoing support to WFCS. As per usual, there will be three prize draws this coming year, (in September, December and March), with four winning numbers being drawn each time. It's really simple to sign up: prospective members of the 100 Club are asked to complete an application form to complete their subscription. Shares cost £1 per month each, and members usually hold between 1 and 5 shares. Obviously, the more shares held, the greater the chance of a win, and the greater the number of subscribers, the larger the annual contribution to WFCS funds and the bigger the prizes! Please contact me if you'd like to subscribe for the first time, make any changes to a current subscription, or ask any questions.

Kate Harrison (A)
100 Club Coordinator



PLAY THE **WORCESTER COMMUNITY LOTTERY**



Did you know that you, your friends and family can help support WFCS funds by buying tickets for the Worcester Community Lottery? Thanks to Worcester Community Lottery tickets bought by a small number of loyal supporters to date, more than £400 has once again been raised towards WFCS funds through this route in the past year. But with even more players supporting us, we could raise so much more. Several of our supporters have also won money and extra free Lottery tickets along the way and **one lucky member matched 5 numbers and scooped the £2000 prize!**

- Worcester Community Lottery is a weekly online lottery that aims to raise money for local charities and good causes
- Every ticket costs £1. Of this 50p goes directly to the local charity selected by the player. A further 10p goes to other local charities
- The draw takes place every Saturday night at 8pm
- The top prize is £25,000 if 6 numbers are matched, £2,000 if 5 consecutive numbers are matched, and so on.
- The average odds of winning a prize are estimated at 50:1
- Minimum purchase is 1 month (5 wks') worth of tickets (£5 spend)
- Tickets are purchased online at www.worcesterlottery.org

So please consider playing, and telling your friends. Simply choose Worcester Festival Choral Society as the charity you want to benefit, to help contribute to staging our wonderful concerts.

HOW TO PLAY

1. Buy your tickets at www.worcesterlottery.org
2. Choose WFCS from the list of charities you wish to support
3. Check the winning numbers online each Saturday, 8pm

Thank you to all players and
GOOD LUCK!

SHOP VIA AMAZON & THE GIVING MACHINE

You can also add to the Society's funds at no extra cost to you, when you shop online:

- As an 'Amazon Associate', WFCS so can earn commission from any qualifying Amazon purchases you make via our special link (NB to work, this link MUST be clicked on directly from our WFCS website)
- The Society can also receive a charitable donation from other retailers, whenever you shop via TheGivingMachine, a registered charity that acts as a channel to more than 2,000 popular retailers including M&S, Tesco, Boots and Ets.

To find both of these special links, visit www.wfcs.online/support_us.

BUY THE WFCS HISTORY BOOK: £1,000 RAISED SO FAR!

The 242-page, full colour book charting the illustrious history of Worcester Festival Choral Society – published in 2021 to mark our 160th anniversary – has now sold more than 160 copies and raised almost £1,000 clear for the Society so far.

'A Choral Chronicle – The History of Worcester Festival Choral Society' charts the WFCS story from its Victorian origins to the present day, via two World Wars, 11 conductors, hundreds of concerts and many famous-name connections. In it you can discover how WFCS started in 1861; how Sir Edward Elgar led the WFCS 'Band', conducted WFCS concerts and chose us to premiere two of his choral works; the truth behind conductor Hugh Blair's unusual dismissal; how WFCS was guest-conducted by Sir Adrian Boult and Sir Hubert Parry; how WFCS helped the Second World War effort; why the WFCS 'Centenary Concert' was a mistake; how the music is programmed for WFCS and Three Choirs Festival concerts... and much more.

As well as drawing on historical archives, the book includes 200+ colour images, plus anecdotes from long-standing Chorus members and many Directors of Music... a fascinating read for any WFCS member or concert-goer!



Copies will continue to be available at rehearsals next season, and from our WFCS website meanwhile (www.wfcs.online/book) at the special price of £20. 100% of this income goes to WFCS funds. Copies are also stocked by Waterstones Worcester, Worcester Tourist Information Centre and Worcester Cathedral Shop (RRP £25).

So if you haven't already got your copy, please buy one and help boost WFCS funds, in exchange for a riveting read!

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

MAHLER'S RESURRECTION SYMPHONY

On 13 May 2023, a few members of WFCS, including myself, took part in a wonderful performance of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 at Worcester Cathedral with Worcestershire Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra included our own WFCS member, Julie Greenwood (2nd violin).

To take part in the chorus, we needed to buy tickets beforehand and pay a small fee. Rehearsals began only 6 days prior to the concert, so rehearsals were quite concentrated. It was lovely to meet singers from other local choirs and to find out a bit about them and how varied their different choirs were.

The chorus were trained by Chorus Director, Kate Cheetham, with German pronunciation training at the first rehearsal by Stephen Cheetham. Everything was incredibly well organised with most communication taking part by email. Vocal scores and pronunciation guides were distributed online beforehand and any questions were quickly answered by Vincent Kirk (Chairman/2nd violin), who co-ordinated the chorus arrangements. This is the first rehearsal schedule I have ever received where the post-concert arrangements to meet in the pub afterwards were actually scheduled on the concert itinerary!

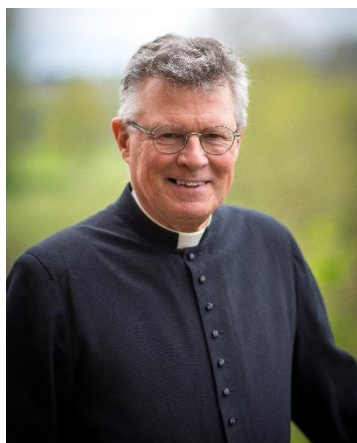


The orchestra were superb, conducted by Keith Slade, a former Young Musician of the Year finalist. This is a massive and powerful work, with a sizeable orchestra – double woodwind and horns, with additional offstage brass. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the piece, the chorus are only involved in the fifth movement, so we were treated to a fabulous performance of Mahler in the period before we performed. The chorus was just under a hundred members, and we had to work hard to be heard over the mighty orchestra, especially to achieve the top B flats in the soprano part in the last 5 bars of the choral writing. This, after a lengthy afternoon rehearsal with the orchestra followed by the evening concert. However, the performance was wonderful and exhilarating, with the sense of occasion carrying us all through. This is a very professional orchestra and, if there is a similar event next year, I urge you to take part if you can.

Alison Riddell (S)
Membership Secretary, WFCS



FAREWELL TO OUR **SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**



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On Friday 25 August our Senior Vice President, the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, retired after 16 years as Dean of Worcester.

Although Friday 25 August was Peter's last day in office his more public and official farewell will be at Evensong at 4pm on Sunday 10 September, and I'm sure that many of you would like to be present on this occasion. Peter will also preside and preach at the 8.00am Eucharist and 10.30am Sung Eucharist on the same day.

We would like to thank the Dean for his long support as our Senior Vice President (especially his attendance at our AGMs) and we send our very best wishes to him and his wife Lynne as they prepare to start their new life in North Yorkshire.

AN OCCASION FOR **CELEBRATION**

Since our last concert Sam and Louise Hudson have welcomed an addition to their family. James Alexander Hudson was born at 23:01 on 10 June 2023, weighing 7lbs 15oz. The committee decided that the society should recognise this event with a gift and Alison and Michelle together had great fun shopping and wrapping a 'baby gift' on behalf of you all. The gift was presented to Sam in the Song School at his first Three Choirs Festival rehearsal after returning from paternity leave.



MY FIRST YEAR AS MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Alison Riddell (S)
Membership Secretary



Welcome to the world of the WFCS Membership Secretary. This is what it looks like with just under 4 weeks to go until the first rehearsal of a new season. There are more leavers and people on the waiting list and ever-changing numbers which mean that I sometimes feel I need the Hogwarts 'sorting hat' to help me with the calculations! I had just printed off the registers, and thought I had finished updating the waiting list database, when I received a new enquiry (from a potential tenor) at 9am this morning. Numbers constantly change, but I actually love it, although it's pretty full on at this time of year.

I have now been in this role for a year and I can't believe that time has passed so quickly. Since the concert in March, we have had five people leave the choral society, one after 13 years and one after 40 years. Whilst my own view is that long-standing membership is to be celebrated, and the committee wanted to say thank you publicly to them, they preferred to remain anonymous and so, as promised, I will not name them. Sally Rees and I were trying to find out when people joined WFCS, so we could recognise long service, but some members were worried that their names and joining dates would be shared and they didn't want this, so I have honoured my promise and will not name anybody unless they give their consent. I have, however, had some wonderful memories and stories from members which I love to read. One member tells of a current member who joined in 1983 and sang Fauré and Dvorak Requiems conducted by Donald Hunt. Three Choirs Festival in 1984 included *Dream of Gerontius* with Dame Janet Baker as the Angel, Benjamin Luxon (baritone) and Stuart Burrows (tenor) as Gerontius. It was recorded by BBC television. Your emails of this type are what makes WFCS the friendly and passionate group that it is, and I always love to hear about your memories.

WFCS currently has a very 'healthy' waiting list of 20 people, so unfortunately if personal circumstances dictate that you take some time out, we can no longer guarantee to hold your place open until the following season. Numbers singing in concerts are restricted to comply with the cathedral's regulations for the new tiered seating. Some of you have suggested how we might manage this more beneficially and the committee will be discussing this.

There is an enormous amount of work and preparation done behind the scenes by Sam Hudson and Nick Freestone, and also the choral and organ scholars. Thank you to Sam, Nick and all of the cathedral scholars. We have noticed! We say farewell this year to Marissa White (alto) who is moving on to Lincoln cathedral as 'lay vicar', Alex Davison (tenor) and Jacob Abel (bass). We also say farewell to Gus Cox (organ scholar) who sang tenor with us and did such a stunning job as accompanist for our 'Come & Sing' Verdi *Requiem* in April. Gus is off to Trinity College, Cambridge where he will take up an organ scholarship whilst studying music as an undergraduate. He hopes to see members of WFCS at evensong or other events there, so please make yourself known to him if you are in Cambridge. Meanwhile we look forward to welcoming new choral and organ scholars for the coming season. They are Chloe Murphy (alto), Thomas Byrne (tenor), George Haylock (bass) and Charles Gurnham (organ and bass). I know you will make them all feel very welcome.

Here's to a wonderful 2023/24 season. I look forward to it and can't wait to see (and hear) you all again soon.

FROM THE **TICKET SECRETARY**

We continue to develop our booking system to try to make the process simple and problem free. This season we have been working with the cathedral to give a greater choice for those needing Access seating and have devised a seating plan which will accommodate the larger orchestras when necessary. Because we now have access to the Cathedral's reliable and stable wi-fi, our card reader is more efficient on concert nights too.

For the second time, WFCS Ticket Sales for all three concerts went LIVE early on July 17th and the best time to choose your seats for all three concerts is NOW!!

Visit [wfcs.online](https://www.wfcs.online) or tel. TicketSource on 0333 666 3366

Don't forget the Chorus deals: -

There's a 20% discount when you buy a ticket for each concert at the same time.

Four members took up this deal this season and reduced their Front Nave £27 tickets to £21.60. Perhaps others might like to

Or, buy 5 tickets and get the 6th free for any one concert

For Chorus deals contact Judy Jenkins
Text on 07855 554192
Email jgjenkins@btinternet.com
Or Tel 01905 354533

Judy Jenkins (A)
Ticket Secretary



A NOTE FROM THE **LIBRARIAN**

The music scores are all ready for our return to singing this Autumn. The copies we are using for *Ein Deutsches Requiem* are the Peters 3672 edition, if you would prefer to sing from your own copy please drop me a note, via Alison, before the start of term so that I do not allocate you a music score.

Sometimes, there are exceptional circumstances that prevent us from performing in the concert. Please make sure that you take positive steps to return your music promptly. You can either hand your music to me at the last rehearsal in person or via another member. Scores can be posted and Alison will be able facilitate this process when you inform her that you are unable to sing in the concert.

See you all in September for some great singing.

Julie Greenwood (A)
Librarian



CALLING WFCS PATRONS FOR 2023-24

The WFCS Patrons Scheme raises significant funds for the Society each year.



ACKNOWLEDGES WITH THANKS THE SUPPORT OF OUR PATRONS IN 2022-23

Patrick and Kate Aydon
Brian Boswell
Joanna Brockell
Angela Brown
Gabrielle Bullock
Byronnes of Worcester
Dr David Carter
Patsy Doherty Wagner
Tony Dyson

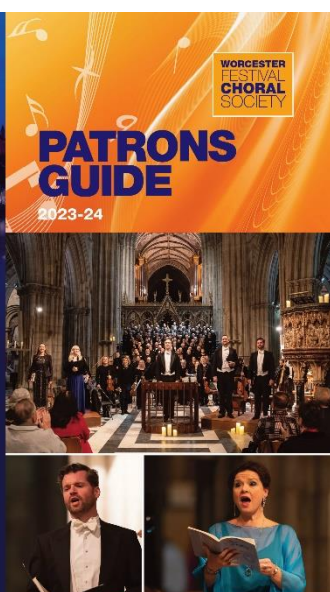
Patric Gardner
Alina and Toby Hooper
Marg Morris
Elin Myers
Joan and Michael Perry
Fred Rendall
Susan Sanders
Kathy and Lewis Steele
Roy Walford

CORPORATE PATRONS
Providing opportunities for local businesses to become Corporate Patrons of WFCS. A range of tailor-made packages offering commercial opportunities and benefits are available to complement support of a season, concert, social or other element of our performance.

To discuss fees and opportunities, please contact our Marketing & Publicity Officer: Michelle Whitlock at michelle@wfcs.org.uk or 01905 214140.

COVID SAFE
Worcester Cathedral is a Covid-safe venue compliant with government guidelines. We will place you as close as possible to your seat preference on the seating plan shown, but we reserve the right to amend your seat allocation if necessary. We will contact you about rebooking options if a concert is cancelled, according to WFCS's terms and conditions.

WORCESTER FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY
Worcester Festival Choral Society is a Registered Charity No. 506826
President: The Lord Bishop of Worcester
The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chapter of Worcester Cathedral



Become an Annual Patron and support great choral music in Worcester Cathedral

That's why, as we look ahead to our next, 2023-24 concert season, we want to encourage many more WFCS members, family and friends to support great choral music in Worcester by taking up, or gifting, WFCS Patron packages for our upcoming season. The price of the Patrons package is £135 and includes:

- Priority booking on a Front Nave seat of your choice at each of our three concerts (individual seat value £27)
- Complimentary concert programmes
- Complimentary interval refreshments in the Chapter House with WFCS members
- Your name and patronage acknowledged in our concert programmes
- A copy of the twice-yearly *Choral Chronicle* giving information about WFCS, and invitations to social events.

It's thanks partly to these significant, reliable donations that, as a Society, we have been able to stay afloat financially in recent times, to support the professional musicians we are privileged to work with, and to continue to cultivate great choral music in our County. Knowing that they are helping the Society, both financially and musically, is rewarding enough for many of our kind Patrons.

Please give one of our application forms (available in PDF format at <https://www.wfcs.online/become-a-patron> or hard copy from me) to anyone you can think of who might appreciate the opportunity to join us. You can also email me at annerenshaw@me.com.

Anne Renshaw (S)
Patrons Secretary




2023-24 SEASON

AUTUMN 25 November 2023
BRAHMS: *Ein deutsches Requiem*
WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*

WINTER 9 December 2023
HANDEL: *Messiah*

SPRING 16 March 2024
BACH: *Mass in B minor*
VERDI: *Requiem*

WHY BE A PATRON?
WFCS Patrons enjoy a range of benefits across the season's three concerts in recognition of their valued support in maintaining great choral music in Worcester.
The annual package comprises:

- A Front Nave seat of your choice at each of our three concerts in the coming season (each seat value £27), with priority seat selection until 18 August 2023
- Complimentary concert programmes
- Complimentary interval refreshments in the Chapter House with WFCS members
- Your name and patronage acknowledged in our concert programmes
- E-newsletters on the Society's activities and invitations to social events

HOW TO APPLY
It's easy to become a WFCS Patron. Simply visit the link below and send it, together with your cheque payable to Worcester Festival Choral Society, to Worcester Festival Choral Society c/o Mayfield, 6 Nunbury Lane, Worcester, WR5 1EG.

or email jag@wfcs.org.uk for online payment details



Please book by 18 August for priority seat selection!

PATRON APPLICATION 2023-24

PATRON PACKAGE

Front Nave season ticket £135

SEAT PREFERENCE

Preferred row: _____ Seat No's: _____

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

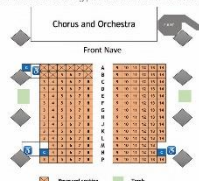
PROGRAMME DETAILS

Your name/s as you wish to appear in programme

Or mark ☒ here if you don't want your name in programme

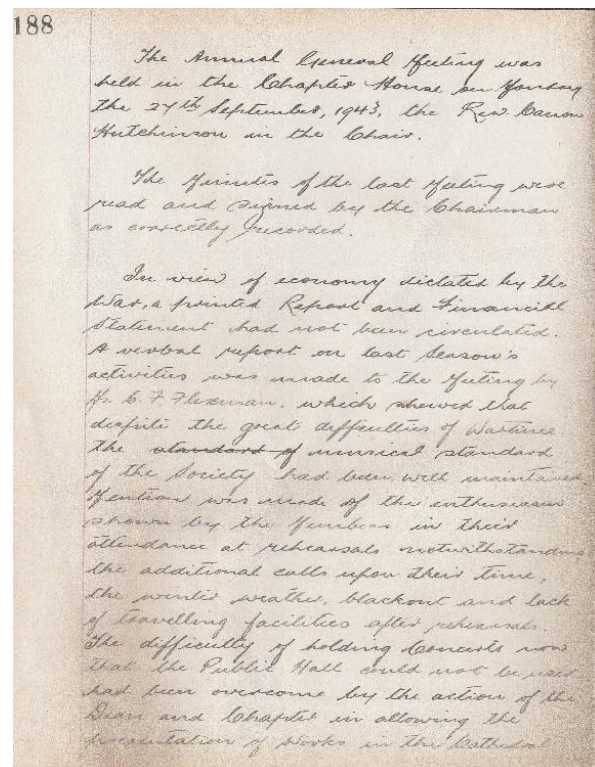
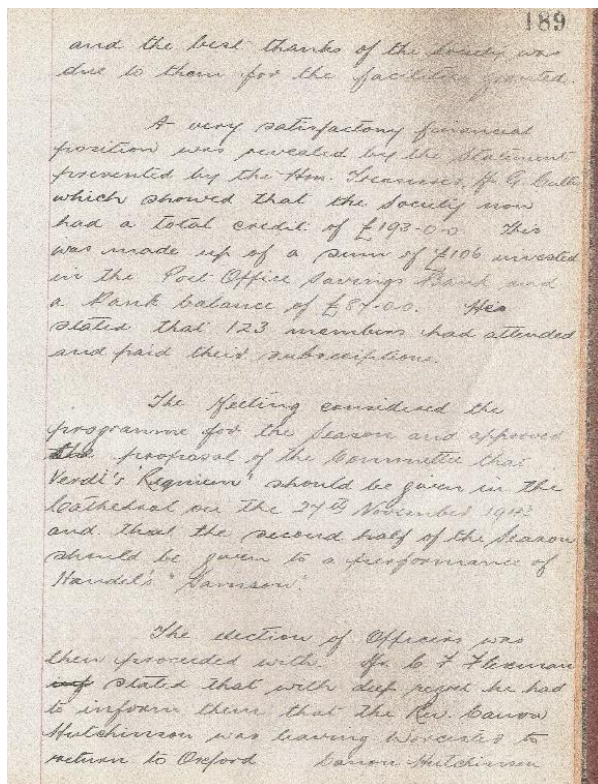
SEATING PLAN

Please mark with a cross your preferred choice of seats on the plan below. We will endeavour to place you as near to that location as possible with the seating plan in use at the cathedral at the time.



FROM THE MINUTE BOOK

A COMMITTEE MEETING SEPTEMBER 1943



My thanks to Stephen Greenwood for finding these minutes which give an insight into the workings of the society during the war years. I have transcribed some of the more interesting parts below. Ed.

"In view of economy dictated by the war, a printed report and financial statement had not been circulated.....A very satisfactory financial position showed that the Society had a total credit of £193-0-0."

"Despite the great difficulties of wartime, the musical standard of the Society had been well maintained. Mention was made of the enthusiasm shown by the members in their attendance at rehearsals notwithstanding the additional calls upon their time, the winter weather, the blackout and lack of travelling facilities after rehearsals"

"The difficulty of holding concerts now that the Public Hall could not be used had been overcome by the action of the Dean and Chapter in allowing the presentation of works in the Cathedral and the best thanks was due to them for the facilities granted."

"The committee considered the programme for the season and approved the proposal that Verdi's Requiem should be given on 27th November and that the second half of the season should be given to a performance of Handel's Samson."

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL GLOUCESTER 2023 AND WORCESTER 2024

A contingent of 30 voices from Worcester drawn mainly from the Choral Society and Choral Scholars formed part of the 120 strong Festival Chorus. We took part in three main concerts.

1. The Holy City (Sancta Civitas) contained two choral works – Vaughan Williams' *Sancta Civitas* and a new commission *Rise up O Sun* by Eleanor Alberga
2. A Song at the End of the World with Gustav Holst's *Ode to Death* and Francis Pott's *A Song at the End of the World*.
3. Elgar, *The Apostles*.

The Eleanor Alberga commission and the Francis Pott (originally commissioned for the Festival in 1999) were challenging to learn and we were privileged to have the composers at a rehearsal and in the audience on the respective nights. The links to the concert reviews are below and give the detail that cannot be expressed in this brief piece! Suffice to say that the challenges were worthwhile, the scale of the works with Orchestras (two of the concerts with the Philharmonia, one with the Royal Philharmonic), semi choruses, Cathedral Choirs, Organ was awesome and the setting historic!

Unfortunately, we cannot include active hyperlinks in the chronicle because the security checks of some systems view them as suspect and reject the entire email. If you wish to see the reviews on the Gloucester concerts or the program for the Worcester Three Choirs please copy and paste the text below into your browser. Ed



<https://seenandheard-international.com/2023/07/a-gripping-inspiring-three-choirs-festival-performance-of-a-major-work-by-francis-pott/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/jul/26/three-choirs-festival-francis-pott-a-song-on-the-end-of-world-review-potts-powerful-oratorio>

<https://seenandheard-international.com/2023/07/electrifying-elgar-sets-the-seal-on-a-memorable-evening-at-the-three-choirs-festival/>

Next year the Festival returns to Worcester for an exciting program with Samuel Hudson as Artistic Director. (Link Below).

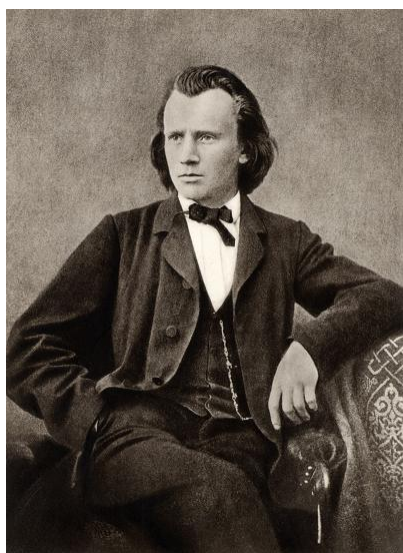
<https://3choirs.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/TCF-Worcester-2024-Advance-Flyer-AW-002.pdf>

Auditions for the Chorus will be held between 18th and 21st October. If you are interested in taking part, please speak to me at one of our rehearsals or email worcesterchorus@3choirs.org. Those who passed auditions for Three Choirs in 2019 will automatically be contacted.

Stephen Greenwood (B)
Chorus Manager Worcester
Three Choirs Festival



A BACKGROUND TO BRAHMS REQUIEM ***EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM (OP. 45)***



A YOUNG BRAHMS

Johannes Brahms began work on his German Requiem in 1865, following the death of his mother. The death of his close friend Robert Schumann in 1866 may also have motivated the composition of a requiem (although Brahms kept such matters extremely private, so we don't have any documentary evidence for this). The final seven-movement work was not completed until late-1868, with the first performance of the complete work taking place in 1869.

There had, however, been performances of the work through its composition, with the first three movements being premiered in Vienna in 1867 (a performance unfortunately spoiled by a misunderstanding of the dynamics by the timpanist, leading to fugal passages being inaudible under the loud playing of the timpani), and a six-movement version (with the fifth movement of the final version absent) being performed in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868.

Although only six movements were heard on that occasion, the implication is that movement 5 was incomplete (or not composed at all) rather than an afterthought, as there is a manuscript leaf in the Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek on which the seven movements appear in sequence in Brahms's hand. The later movements were subsequently renumbered, omitting the fifth movement. It therefore appears that the symmetrical structure of the final version of the work was Brahms's initial plan, with the fifth movement later withdrawn from the Bremen performance.

It is correspondence surrounding that performance in Bremen that gives us documentary evidence around Brahms' intent for the work and his choice of texts. Karl Martin Reinthaler, organist of Bremen Cathedral, requested that the work better reflect the resurrection, given the date of the performance and the liturgical demands of the occasion, writing the following suggestion to Brahms:

"Already the second number indicates the prediction of the return of the Lord, and in the last number but one there is express reference to the mystery of the resurrection of the dead, 'we shall not all sleep.' For the Christian mind, however, there is lacking the point on which everything turns, namely the redeeming death of Jesus. Perhaps the passage 'death, where is thy sting' would be the best place to introduce this idea, either briefly in the music itself before the fugue, or in a new movement. Moreover, you say in the last movement, 'blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,' that is, after Christ has finished the work of redemption."

Brahms responded that he had considered such texts, but had settled on the final selections because, "I am a musician... I needed them." In fact, following Brahms's refusal to set a resurrection text, the performance in Bremen also included the aria *I know that my Redeemer liveth* from Handel's *Messiah* to satisfy the demands of the clergy.

We can learn a great deal about Brahms' character and beliefs from the German Requiem. His decision to collate his own texts from the bible (set in the vernacular, rather than using the Latin Mass of the Dead as the basis for the work) is a demonstration of his Protestant background and his deep biblical knowledge and love of the texts. His study and appreciation for Bach and his contemporaries can be seen through the magnificent fugal passages that appear throughout the work.



BRAHMS'S MOTHER

Indeed, we can see from the symmetrical structure that the entire work has been planned by Brahms based on his selection of Biblical texts in the Lutheran tradition. It is notable that he goes out of his way to have no mention of "Christ" in the text, and this is perhaps because he was not a practicing believer in the sense of attending church or believing in religious dogma. Instead, the structure of the work is entirely Christocentric, with every movement framed by the words of Christ in the form of a beatitude. This perfectly sums up Brahms's religious views: a love of the bible, yet no belief in regular church going. Coupled with the personal reasons for its composition, largely the death of Brahms's mother, then the Requiem's musical content and setting of text can reveal a great deal about Johannes Brahms's character and beliefs, whilst continuing to be a choral masterpiece that inspires generations of performers and listeners.

Nicholas Freestone MA FRCO
Worcester Cathedral Deputy Director of Music
WFCS Accompanist



STOP PRESS



SOLOISTS CONFIRMED

Soloists for 25 November 2023

Rebecca Hardwick	Soprano
Julien Van Mellaerts	Baritone

Soloists for 9 December 2023

Emilia Morton	Soprano
Samantha Price	Counter Tenor
Matthew Minter	Tenor
James Oldfield	Bass Baritone

Soloists for 16 March 2024

Susanna Fairbairn	Soprano
Samantha Price	Alto
Gwilym Bowen	Tenor
Dominic Sedgwick	Bass

AGM NOTICE

The annual WFCS AGM takes place on Monday 25 September, in lieu of the second half of rehearsal. Everyone is expected to attend, however if you will be absent, please let the Members' Secretary Alison Riddell know in advance.

HALF MARATHON

On Monday 3 September Nick Freestone will be running in the Cheltenham Half Marathon. Nick hopes to raise funds for the Cathedral. If you would like to support him the link is:
<https://visufund.com/nick-half-marathon>

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter. The next Choral Chronicle will be published just before the end of our spring term in 2024. If any of you have articles which you think may be of interest to other members, please send them to the Editor rees.sallyjane@gmail.com for consideration before the end of January 2024.

NB we are unable to include advertisements.

WFCS DIARY DATES 2023-24

Any ongoing revisions will be notified to members and published at: www.wfcs.online/members







Autumn Term 2023

September	Mon 11	7.30pm	St Andrew's	First rehearsal (arrive early to collect music)
	Mon 18	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 25	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal (and AGM – please attend if poss)
October	Mon 2	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 9	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 16	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 23	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 30	-	-	HALF TERM
November	Mon 6	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 13	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 20	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Sat 25	1.30pm 7.30pm (line up 7.05pm)	Worc Cathedral	Afternoon rehearsal (compulsory) AUTUMN CONCERT BRAHMS: Ein Deutsches Requiem
	Mon 27	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
December	Mon 4	7.30pm	St Andrew's	Rehearsal
	Sat 9	1.30pm 7:30pm (line up 7.05pm)	Worc Cathedral	Afternoon rehearsal (compulsory) WINTER CONCERT Handel: Messiah
	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>	<i>Worc Cathedral</i>	<i>Worcs Cathedral Christmas Concert</i> <i>(WFCS participation tbc)</i>

Spring Term 2024

January	Mon 8	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	First rehearsal (arrive early to collect music)
	Mon 15	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 22	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 29	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
February	Mon 5	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 12	-	-	HALF TERM
	Mon 19	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 26	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
March	Mon 4	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Mon 11	7.30pm	Worc Cathedral	Rehearsal
	Sat 16	1.30pm 7:30pm (line up 7.05pm)	Worc Cathedral	Afternoon rehearsal (compulsory) SPRING CONCERT Beethoven: Mass in C Blackford: Mirror of Perfection
April	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>	Come & Sing Choral Workshop (details tbc)

YOUR WFCS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHAT THEY DO

 <p>CHAIRMAN Ben Cooper (B) b.cooper@lineone.net 01684 541421</p>	 <p>MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Alison Riddell (S) alison.riddell@hotmail.com 07710 180294</p>
 <p>DEPUTY CHAIRMAN Sue White (S) Susan.white.wfcs@gmail.com 07970 597229</p>	 <p>PATRONS SECRETARY Anne Renshaw (S) annerenshaw@me.com 01905 351736</p>
 <p>GENERAL SECRETARY Stephen Greenwood (B) Greenwood_family@hotmail.com 07771 971658</p>	 <p>MARKETING & PR OFFICER Michelle Whitefoot (S) michelle@whitefootpr.co.uk 07969 818490</p>
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 <p>LIBRARIAN Julie Greenwood (A) Greenwood_family@hotmail.com 07771 971659</p>	 <p>GENERAL MEMBER Jenny Brumhead (A) jmbrumhead@gmail.com 01905 763299</p>
 <p>TICKET SECRETARY Judy Jenkins (A) jgjenkins@btinternet.com 01905 354533</p>	 <p>GENERAL MEMBER Sally Rees (S) rees.sallyjane@gmail.com 01684 564721</p>

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

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Interim Dean

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Samuel Hudson MA FRCO

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Nicholas Freestone MA FRCO

All photos of WFCS, Worcester Cathedral and Three Choirs Festival in this issue taken by, and copyright to, our photographer Michael Whitefoot, with grateful thanks! www.michaelwhitefoot.co.uk