

OUR YEAR SO FAR FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As I write, I am enjoying an extra night in with a week off for half term. With our last concert of the season on the horizon, we are coming towards the end of a successful season for the society. Life for us seems to be back on an even keel, with the lockdowns becoming a distant memory and the weather seeming to be calm (hopefully I'm not tempting fate!)

It feels as though we were only singing *A Sea Symphony* and *Sea Drift* a few weeks ago, and now we are preparing for Elgar's masterpiece, *The Dream of Gerontius*. Both the Vaughan Williams and the Elgar are well known to many of us, but I have to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed rehearsals, and still discovering notes that I must have sung incorrectly for years. There are many of you also who have opened the scores of these iconic works for the first time.



Programming a season is not as easy as it may seem. Sam, with guidance from myself and the Treasurer, has to find a programme that is affordable, as well as inviting to an audience and will sell tickets. At the same time the Chorus needs to be challenged whilst taking into account that there are members

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with upwards of 40 years membership who have sung a vast amount of the choral repertoire, whilst others are in the first years of their choral journey.

At this point in the season I would like to extend huge thanks to the Committee. As you all know there were many changes at the last AGM. The Treasurer, General Secretary, Membership Secretary and Librarian are all new this season. The handovers from the previous incumbents have been superb, which has meant a seamless transition and so the Society has continued to function as professionally as it has for years. The work behind the scenes is enormous, and all the Committee do it with great humour and dedication. At the end of this season Anne Renshaw will stand down as Patron's Secretary after over 10 years in the post. So, I'd like to thank Anne for all her hard work over the years. I therefore invite any of you to come forward and find out more about what the job entails. If you are interested, please talk to Anne or myself. You do not need to be a member of the Committee for this role.

Having been a member for 15 years, I still love turning up each Monday to sing. Worcester Festival Choral Society is a part of my life which I cherish. It's not just the singing, but also the friendships I have made over the years. One friend, John Bleney, retired this year after 60 years, so it's proof that there is something wonderful about what we do!

Ben Cooper (B)
Chairman



CONDUCTOR'S SUMMARY

The 2022-23 season has been a joyous one – the first complete season of my first four years in Worcester, thanks not just to a pandemic, but also some falling stone from the cathedral tower!

Despite the interruptions and challenges of the past few years, I feel a great sense of development and progress in the ranks of the Society. The first concert of the season was a personal highlight, with Vaughan Williams' magnificent *A Sea Symphony* paired with a shorter but challenging work by Delius – *Sea Drift*, the two works linked by the words of Walt Whitman.



That was really the first chance I ever had to experience the full force, not of any waves, I'm pleased to say, but of WFCS accompanied by a full and robust symphony orchestra, and what an exhilarating and literally spine-tingling experience it was!

After our annual reunion with an old friend in Handel's *Messiah*, what better way to end the season than with the music which is somehow engraved in our beautiful cathedral and in the surrounding landscapes – Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. Every rehearsal of this work reminds me what a privilege it is to be here making this music together. I hope this music, which as Elgar said, is 'the best of me', will bring out the best in us!

Samuel Hudson
Director of Music

HELP US TO INCREASE **PATRON POWER**

WFCS has a Patrons scheme whereby members contribute an annual subscription (equivalent to the membership fee of our singers), which provides a front nave seat of their choice at each of our three concerts, complimentary programmes and refreshments in the Chapter House, plus their names listed in the programme as much valued supporters of WFCS.

Patrons' commitment to supporting all our concerts helps the Society to cover on-going costs in advance of the next season. For various reasons - not least the pandemic and its consequences - numbers of Patrons have dropped in recent years and we would like to build our core audience for the future, especially in opening up opportunities for greater involvement in the Society's social events and behind-the-scenes activity.

Potential Patrons are most likely to be people who already attend our concerts, either occasionally or regularly, and this is often the family and friends of Chorus members.

Please would our singers give thought to the idea of encouraging any family or friends who do come to our concerts to become a Patron? Since the Patron seat is reserved for the season, it doesn't even have to be the same family member or friend who attends each concert. Some of our current Patrons already do this when they are unable to attend a concert themselves for any reason.

Patrons' support really does make a difference to the Society's annual income and with rising costs and other challenges, sustainability of organisations such as WFCS is an ever-increasing concern.

The new 2023-24 season Patron application form will be out in March. Please pick one up, and/or email me for further info at annerenshaw@me.com

Help us to find new supporters to keep our wonderful WFCS vibrant for another 160 years!



Anne Renshaw (S)
Patrons secretary

A MESSAGE FROM THE **MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

When I re-joined WFCS in January 2022, after more years than I thought, I said that I didn't mind being a "bit more involved". I thought perhaps I would be asked to make the occasional cake or hand out some flyers for concerts but a few weeks later I was approached to see if I might take on the role of Membership Secretary. I enjoy admin, and I thought perhaps I had the skills for this job, but even I am surprised by the amount of work that is involved, particularly emails. Having said that, I love it and it is a real privilege to share so much with many of you. It has been a real eye-opener to realise what some people are going through and yet we never know when they come to rehearsals, and that is exactly why we do it. Singing makes us feel so much better, no matter what we are going through.

Behind the scenes, there is an incredible amount of work done by Committee members, of which I was never aware. Sally Rees, the outgoing Membership Secretary, has been a wonderful support by my side as I learned the role.

The first thing I discovered was that registers don't just appear on the table; they need to be created. People move voice part, leave or new members arrive and they need auditions. Fortunately, there

is a wonderful team working behind the scenes at WFCS and they have been so welcoming. They never moan when I send them emails and ask questions. Everyone seems so cheerful to do what they can to help. It's a community that I love to be part of and I am loving every minute of it.

This year has been a busy one. We now have new tiered seating for concerts and so need to work to a smaller number of 142. I have been surprised by the number of people who leave and join during a year. This year, ten people left during the Autumn term and another three will leave at the end of this term. Some of them are long-standing members and we thank them for their loyalty and service. Thank you all. One in particular, John Bleney (B), had been a member of the Society for 60 years, an incredible contribution.

Since September, we have welcomed eight new members and auditioned more than that number. A campaign to add more men to the Chorus was begun at Christmas time, and we have welcomed four Tenors and Basses from that. There is a waiting list of eight at the moment, all ladies.

The number of emails I receive and send is much larger than I ever imagined, but most of you are very good at responding promptly and this has helped me enormously. Thank you all for making me so welcome this season!



Alison Riddell (S)
Membership Secretary

REMINDERS FROM THE TICKETS SECRETARY

SATURDAYS AT 7.30PM
2023-24 CONCERT SEASON
WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

25 NOVEMBER 2023
BRAHMS
EIN DEUTSCHES REQUIEM
WAGNER
SIEGFRIED IDYLL

9 DECEMBER 2023
HANDEL
MESSIAH

16 MARCH 2024
BEETHOVEN
MASS IN C
RICHARD BLACKFORD
MIRROR OF PERFECTION

TICKETS £15 - £27 from
WFCS.ONLINE
0333 666 3366
Local call rate & booking fees apply
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 506826

Tickets for WFCS Season 2023-24 will go on sale to the public during the summer. Remember to watch the WFCS website for information about when they will go 'live' so that you can choose the best seats for yourself and your friends!

There are also several ticket discounts available to Chorus members (listed right). Four members took up the 20% deal this season and reduced their Front Nave £27 tickets to £21.60. Perhaps others might like to try this.

Contact me on
jgjenkins@btinternet.com or
01905 354533 for these
offers.

Judy Jenkins (A)
Tickets Secretary



TICKET DISCOUNTS FOR CHORUS MEMBERS

- 20% discount if you book seats for all three concerts at the same time (ie a £25 for £20)
- 'Buy 5 tickets and get 6th free' for any one concert

SUPPORT WFCS BY PLAYING THE WORCESTER COMMUNITY LOTTERY



Did you know that you, your friends and family can help support WFCS funds simply by buying tickets for the Worcester Community Lottery? Thanks to Worcester Community Lottery tickets bought by a small number of our Chorus members to date, more than £350 has once again been raised towards WFCS funds through this route in the past year. Several of our supporters have also won money and extra free Lottery tickets along the way. But with even more players supporting us, we could raise so much more!

- 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 (please choose WFCS!) A further 10p goes to other local charities
- The draw takes place every Saturday night at 8pm
- The top prize is £25,000 if six numbers are matched, £2,000 if five consecutive numbers are matched, and so on.
- The average odds of winning a prize are estimated at 50:1
- Minimum purchase is one month (5 wks) worth of tickets (£5 spend)
- **Purchase your tickets 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!

WHAT IS THE 100 CLUB?

When asked about the 100 Club, some people might think first of the historic club at 100 Oxford Street, which began with jazz and jitterbug, hosted the first ever Punk festival, and has embraced musical genres from rock to reggae, South African jazz to indie bands ever since.

Our 100 Club is the other version, a lottery for members present (and some past), which helps to support fundraising activity for the Society. It isn't *quite* as historic - though has been running for at least 35 years - and might be more correctly known as 'The 134 Club' as this is the current number of 'shares' in the draw, which is taken three times a year. Each draw has four winners: the prizes are equal and shares are easy enough to buy, a nice treat! In addition, the club is able to contribute a very useful sum to the WFCS funds each year. Shares cost £1 per month each, and 100 Club members complete an application form to subscribe. Members usually hold between one and five shares. Obviously, the more shares held, the greater the chance of a win, and the greater the number of subscribers, the bigger the prizes!

Deirdre Myers is to be congratulated for her ten years or so running the club. She has recently 'retired' from the role and handed over its administration to Kate Harrison (A). If you would like to have a shot at winning, please contact Kate for details! She will be sending an email to all WFCS members imminently with further details.

Kate Harrison (A)
100 Club Rep.



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!



RAISE FUNDS FOR WFCS WHEN SHOPPING VIA AMAZON & THE GIVING MACHINE

Shopping online? Did you know that you can also add to the Society's funds at no extra cost to you, when you buy goods on Amazon, or access your favourite shops via The Giving Machine?

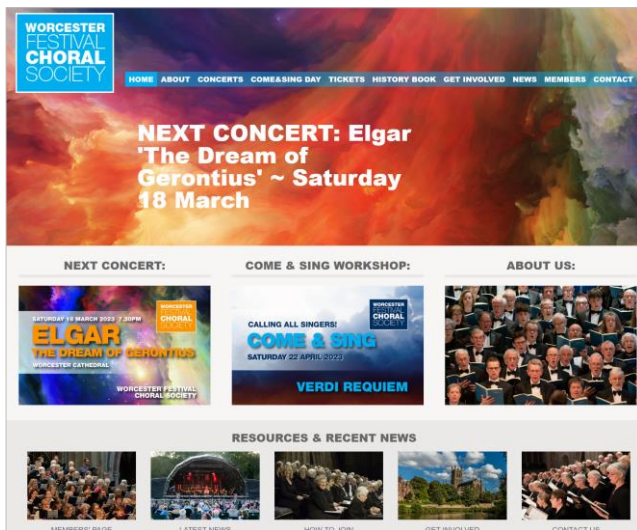
- **AMAZON:** Because WFCS is an 'Amazon Associate', we can earn commission from any qualifying Amazon purchases you make via our special web link (See below. NB to work, this link **MUST** be clicked on directly from our WFCS website)
- **THE GIVING MACHINE:** WFCS can also receive a charitable donation from more than 2,000 other popular retailers such as M&S, Tesco, Boots and Etsy, whenever you shop online via TheGivingMachine (a registered charity that acts as a channel to more than 2,000 popular retailers)

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

WFCS ONLINE: **STAY IN TOUCH THIS SUMMER!**

As we head towards the summer break, don't forget that there are several ways to stay abreast of the latest WFCS news, keep in touch with fellow Chorus members, help to share Society updates far and wide, and find out what's happening on the Worcestershire music and arts scene...

WEBSITE: www.wfcs.online



Keep an eye on our website www.wfcs.online for the latest concert, event and member news, press releases, audience testimonials, Patrons news, photos and more.



TWITTER: @WorcsChoral
(www.twitter.com/worcschoral)
913 followers and counting



We also share our concert news, posters, ticket links, plus other local event and music news etc, via Twitter. So if you or your workplace are on Twitter, please follow our WFCS Twitter feed and Like/RT our messages to the wider world!



FACEBOOK: @WorcsChoral (www.facebook.com/WorcsChoral) 758 followers and counting



our page and Like/Share/ Comment on our posts to help them reach far and wide. Even if you don't have a Facebook account, you can still type in the above link to read our posts.

Several times each week, you'll find the latest WFCS news and event updates, photo galleries, audio and radio clips, quizzes, interesting music-related video links, useful local arts information and much more on our Facebook page. It's one of the main ways we can raise our profile with wider potential audiences, as well as staying in ongoing touch with our members, Patrons and friends. So if you are on Facebook, please Like

Michelle Whitefoot (S)
Marketing & publicity officer



LOOKING AHEAD TO THE THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL GLOUCESTER (22-29 JULY)

The origins of this musical event date back to at least 1715, making the Three Choirs Festival by far the longest running musical festival in the UK – and this year it will be Gloucester's turn to host the 295th Festival.

Members of Worcester Festival Choral Society have been taking part in the Three Choirs' Festival for over 160 years, and this summer, 28 auditioned members will be swelling the ranks at Gloucester.

At the time of this publication details of all the events have yet to be announced, but the full programme is due to be released in March. The eight-day festival will showcase rich and varied musical traditions from around the world, from evening offerings in the cathedral to family programmes. This year the Festival will be honouring one of Gloucestershire's greatest sons, Ralph Vaughan Williams, closing a year of national celebrations marking his 150th anniversary. The programme will include some of Vaughan Williams' finest works, including *Sancta*



Gloucester Festival Village 2019

Civitas, *Flos campi* and his rarely performed opera *The Pilgrim's Progress*. As ever, music by Edward Elgar will be included and this year will feature his extraordinarily vivid oratorio *The Apostles*, as well as his heart-breakingly beautiful Violin Concerto. A preview of the Festival can be found at <https://3choirs.org/gloucester-2023>, with the full programme being announced on 22 March.

Auditions for the next Festival Chorus cycle (ie from Worcester 2024 onwards) are not until autumn 2023, but to find out more, have a word with our Three Choirs Festival Worcester chorus manager, Stephen Greenwood (B) in due course.



Opening Service Gloucester 2019

'COME & SING' VERDI REQUIEM – HOSTED BY WFCS



Don't miss WFCS's popular 'Come and Sing' one-day choral workshop on Saturday 22 April 2023 in St Andrew's Methodist Church, Pump Street, Worcester.

Open to all singers, the event is a wonderful opportunity to introduce your friends or family to the pleasure of singing with a large chorus, not to mention a vital fundraiser for our Society!

As usual our Choral Workshop will provide the chance for members and non-members alike to learn (or reprise!) the choral sections of a classical masterpiece. This year Worcester Cathedral's esteemed director of music and WFCS conductor, Samuel Hudson, will be guiding us through the music and providing us with fascinating musical insights and singing tips. Gus Cox, Worcester Cathedral's talented organ scholar, will provide the piano accompaniment.

Possibly the most dramatic and memorable work the composer ever wrote, Verdi's *Requiem* – featuring choruses such as Dies Irae (Day of Wrath) – is a musical 'blockbuster' that sends shivers down the spine.

More than 100 amateur singers from across the UK are expected to attend the workshop. Participants don't need choral experience to take part, but some ability to read music is useful to get the most out of the day. There will be plenty of refreshment breaks to relax and socialise. Plus, as always, there will be an array of homemade cakes and pre-orderable hot lunches to tempt the tastebuds.

Doors will open for registration from 9:30am, with singing sessions commencing at 10:15am. In the afternoon there will be an informal performance when participants can demonstrate what they have learned during the day and which participants' families and friends can attend free of charge. The day will finish by 4.45 pm.

Tickets, which include score hire and free teas/coffees throughout the day, are £20 (adult) and £10 (students)

For more information, online booking and a downloadable PDF leaflet (incl. postal booking form) visit: www.wfcs.online/come-and-sing-events (Booking deadline Wednesday 19 April).

WFCS AUTUMN TERM 2023

Saturday 25 November concert:
BRAHMS *Ein Deutsches Requiem*

Rehearsals begin: Monday 11th September

Half Term: Monday 30th October

CARDINAL NEWMAN *(author of the 1865 The Dream of Gerontius poem which Elgar set to music)*

A MEMBER'S PERSONAL INSIGHT

Katie Neale (A) writes:

"My great-great grandmother, Jane Catton, was one of the first pupils at St Anne's Convent School in Birmingham founded by St John Henry Newman. In the 1850s Jane and her husband Job went to work at the Oratory Father's home in Rednal as housekeeper and caretaker. The Retreat House was used by Cardinal Newman and other Fathers as a home where they could rest and recuperate away from the busy work of the Oratory Church in Birmingham. In his prolific diaries and letters, Cardinal Newman mentions Jane and Job a number of times. On Christmas Eve 1859, Job was preparing the pony and trap to collect 'the Cardinal' as he was always known in our family from Barnt Green station and bring him to the Retreat House but he was taken ill suddenly before he could set off for the station and died of apoplexy. Cardinal Newman wrote a few days later to his sister Jemima that it had been difficult to complete all the necessary preparations of Christmas Eve after a lengthy wait at the station and eventual late arrival at the Retreat House.

After Job's death, my great grandfather Joe took over his duties at the Retreat House, but he did not enjoy good health as Newman remarks himself in his diaries. He also mentions an incident where Jane was distraught that she had forgotten the Cardinal was coming to stay at the Retreat House, and she had not prepared everything for his arrival because she had spent the previous four days caring for one of the Fathers' cows, which was sick with milk fever. She was so upset that she had been neglectful of her duties that she begged for this not to be mentioned to the Cardinal. However, he learned of this anyway and was said to have prayed for the cow which promptly improved!

There are many biographies of St John Henry Newman which often give the impression of him as a proud man, but my grandmother recalled her father and grandfather describing him as a more modest man. My great-grandfather reported a conversation between John Newman and Job Catton shortly before Newman became a Cardinal where he told Job that the authorities in the Church were "after him again for promotion" but he felt he was not the right man for the job: "I was not born in the faith and I am not worthy of the role." It is this sentiment that I think is often apparent in his poem "The Dream of Gerontius" which provided the inspiration for Elgar's work of the same name.

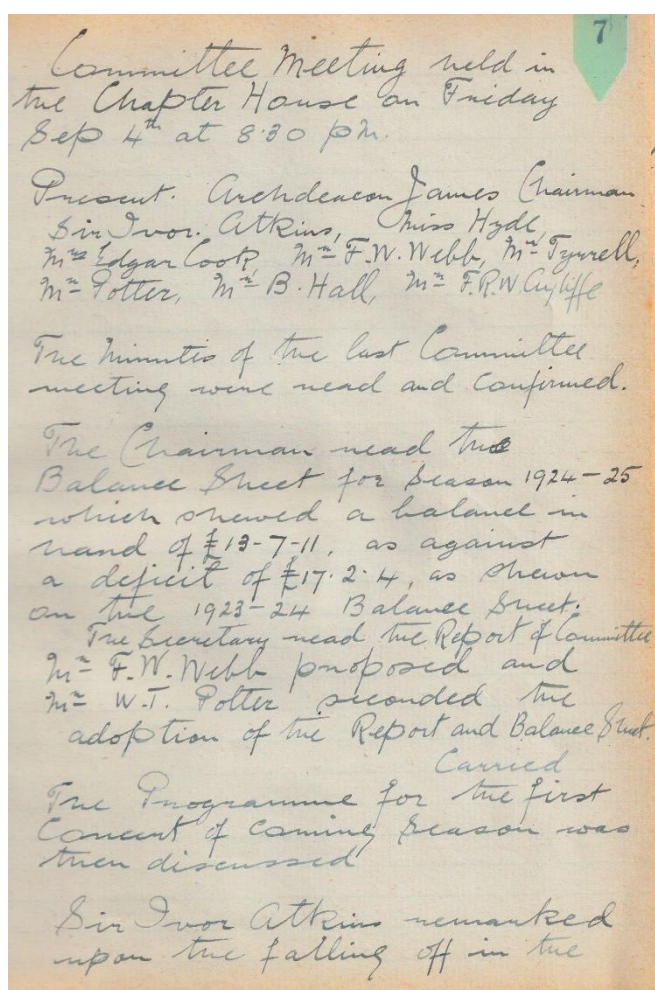
We are very grateful to Katie for providing this interesting account.



1881 portrait of Cardinal John Henry Newman by Sir John Everett Millais

FROM THE MINUTE BOOK A COMMITTEE MEETING FROM 1925

Stephen Greenwood (B) discovered this entry in our archive of historic Minute Books and we thought it would be an interesting insight into the workings of the Society from almost 100 years ago. The below Committee Meeting was held in the Chapter House at 8:30pm on 4 September 1925.



"Present: Archdeacon James Chairman, Sir Ivor Atkins, Miss Hyde, Mrs Edgar Cook, Mr F W Webb, Mr Tyrell, Mr Potter Mr B Hall, Mr F R W Ayliffe.

The minutes of the last committee meeting were read and confirmed. The Chairman read the balance sheet for season 1924-25 which showed a balance in hand of £13-7-11 as against a deficit of £17-2-4 as shown on the 1923-24 balance sheet. The Secretary read the report of committee Mr Webb proposed, Mr Potter seconded. Adoption of report and balance sheet carried.

The program for the first concert of the coming season was then discussed. Sir Ivor Atkins remarked on the falling off in the members of the Chorus and suggested that a work like "Elijah" might prove an attraction to other singers to join the society. This was discussed at some length together with three other suggested works *Five Hymns of Praise*, *Job* and *The Redemption*.

Miss Hyde raised the point as to whether a performance of *Elijah* would not distract from the interests of the [Three Choirs] Festival, also she felt that as the *Elijah* was so well known it would not create the interest anticipated. She would like to see a more ambitious work for the orchestra. The committee were not in general agreement with

this and after further discussion it was decided to present *Elijah* as the subject for the first concert, it being the general opinion that the members generally would favour the selection of that work. It was decided to spend £23 on soloists and £40 on Orchestra.

Dec 8th was fixed as the date for concert.

The first choral rehearsal to be followed by the AGM was fixed as Monday Sept 28th.

Miss E W Webb suggested that we advertise in the local press for new members both choral and orchestral. Application to be made to the Hon Secretary".

Accepted: S R James

Dated: Dec. 2 1925

A TIME OF MAGIC MEMORIES OF A PREVIOUS MEMBER

When Alison Riddell (S) was talking with her mother Pat Maylor recently, she realised that Pat (now 93) had many memories from her early days of singing with the WFCS Chorus which we thought would be of interest to you.

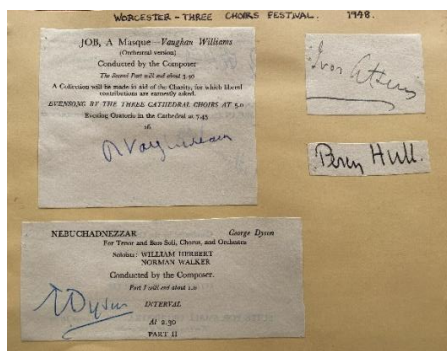
"It was a time of Magic". That was how Pat Maylor viewed her first experience of singing with WFCS. At the time Pat was still a sixth form pupil at Worcester Girls' Grammar School and was very fortunate that her enthusiastic music teacher, Mary Wiley, was looking for new ways for Pat to experience music. So, in addition to singing madrigals and her piano and flute lessons she encouraged Pat to join WFCS. The year was 1948, the country was just recovering from the rigors of the Second World War and musical events of any kind were very rare, being limited to the Cathedral and the then 'Public Hall' in the Corn Market.



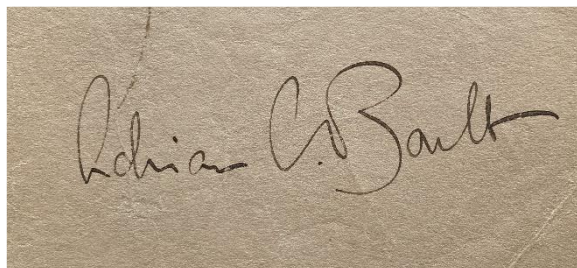
At the time Sir Ivor Atkins was the director of music for WFCS. Pat found him to be a "man of few words". She wasn't sure he enjoyed having sixth formers in the Chorus and as a very young member, she was in awe of him. Rehearsals at the time were held in the Chapter House, a practice which continued until the early 2000s when the wooden floor of the Chapter House was replaced by stone slabs and the choir robes which had lined the walls were removed – thus completely ruining the acoustic and rendering the venue unsuitable for rehearsals. Pat recalls an occasion when Sir Ivor conducted the rehearsals from a chair placed on the lid of the grand piano. That year WFCS performed the Bach *St Matthew Passion* and *Messiah*, it was Pat's first experience of singing with a large chorus and she was hooked.

At the time a good grade in your WFCS audition was sufficient for a Chorus member to be considered to sing in the Three Choirs Festival, so, that summer, Pat participated in the Worcester 3CF. Two of the major works performed that year were *Job* conducted by the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams and George Dyson's *Nebuchadnezzar*. Pat was overawed to be in the presence of such famous musicians and managed to obtain their autographs, along with those of others participating in the Festival, images below.

Thank you Pat for sharing your fond WFCS memories with us!



R Vaughan -Williams, Percy Hull,
George Dyson, Ivor Atkins



Adrian Boulton

IN MEMORIAM REMEMBERING PAST MEMBERS

Sadly, in recent months we have been informed of the deaths of three of our former members who had supported the Society for many years. We remember them all with affection.

Thank you to their families and friends for the memories of their lives and their contributions to the society .

Alison Boswell (A) 7 March 1944 – 12 October 2022

Alison was born in Romford, Essex. She grew up in a loving family and was a member of the local church. Like her mother, two aunts and her sister and future sister-in-law she went to the Romford County High School for Girls where she acquitted herself well in all subjects but especially in the arts. The one subject she did not like was maths. Maybe this is why she was willing to marry an accountant, even if he could not sing in tune!

Alison went on to gather many O- and A-levels before training as a Physiotherapist at the Royal London Hospital. She worked in an intensive care unit, then a school for children with complex needs and latterly, on a voluntary basis, she served several years at St Richard's Hospice as their only Physio.

Alison was with Brian by the age of 14 and they married in 1967. They have two daughters and five Grandchildren and shared 64 happy years together.



Alison loved to paint and sketch on holiday and she was a very good pianist and an excellent singer, first singing with the Crowborough Choral Society for 25 years, latterly with Worcester Festival Choral Society for a similar time and with The Oakville Singers for approaching 30 years. Strangely the first concert Alison and Brian went to together, and the last one sung by us, just before her illness overtook her, were the same: *St John's Passion*.

Alison loved sailing and the natural world, whether enjoying the wonders of the scenery, watching birds and wildlife or planning and tending the garden, but her great joy was that she was able to encourage and share all her interests with first her children and then the grandchildren. She cherished family times and a great deal of laughter was always on the menu.

Alison always had time and a smile for everyone. In a crowd she would see the person on their own and talk with them and she loved to hear people's news. She always offered to help at WFCS events and made cakes for every concert with a beam and a kind word of encouragement. We send our heartfelt condolences to Brian and their family; she was a special lady.

Michael Pegg FRCO (T)

We are sad to record the death of Mike Pegg, who sang Tenor with WFCS from the 1980s onwards and took part in a number of Three Choirs Festivals.

Mike was Head of Music at the Alice Ottley School from 1986-2001 and organist and Director of Music at Pershore Abbey until 2019. Throughout his life he shared his love of music, of the sea, boats and walks in the Devon and Worcestershire countryside with his wife, Laurel. Mike was a talented musician; an organist who had given recitals and played in many churches and cathedrals throughout the UK, a sensitive accompanist, teacher and choirmaster who will be remembered not only for his musical talents but also for his kind, gentle approach and wide smile.

We will miss Mike and send our deepest sympathy to his wife and family.



© Colin Reeves
Pershore Abbey

Ellen Mary Parsons (A) 12 June 1922 - 12 December 2021







© Worcester News

It is also appropriate at this time to pay tribute to Mary Parsons who died in December 2021, just six months short of her 100th birthday. Mary was a singer with, and a stalwart supporter of, Worcester Festival Choral Society for many years. Some of you will remember her book on the Society, "*A Prevailing Passion*" published in 1996 (some of which our new book incorporates). We are also indebted to Mary for her generous donation to the Society after her death.

Mary died peacefully at Bradbury Court Care Home, Malvern, aged 99. She was born in Beverley, Yorks. and educated at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford (BA). She had a long career teaching English, mainly at the former Worcester Grammar School for Girls. A teacher and friend to many, Mary had a long life well lived.



YOUR WFCS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHAT THEY DO

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