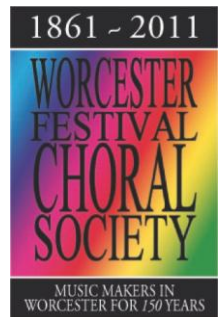


# The Choral Chronicle



Autumn 2011

150 years of great music-making

**Chairman**

**Mark Elliston**

**Hello everyone!** As we approach the climax of our anniversary year, I hope you're all enjoying the rehearsals for *The Dream of Gerontius*, the chosen work for our Gala concert, a work that truly encapsulates Elgar's great mastery of orchestration and chorus - fitting for us from our great composer who was so involved with WFCS in its early days!

**Our season** started off with the Open Rehearsal and it was great to welcome so many guests that night for their opportunity to see what we're like. Well, we must have made a good impression because so many have applied for membership. It looks like our total numbers for this season will be 170+, not bad considering we under 130 just three years ago!

**The AGM** was held on Sept 26<sup>th</sup> and though it went on a bit longer than we had hoped (must get it back to 15 mins next year!), a lot of business was conducted mainly to do with agreeing certain changes to the Rule Book. My thanks go to David Norledge for all the work he did in getting these changes written and approved by members. The book is now being re-printed.

**The Gala Dinner** was a night to remember by all who came. It was an historic occasion to see four of our last conductors, all together, spanning the last 60 years of our history - Sir David Willcocks(1950-57), Dr Christopher Robinson (1962 -1974), Dr Donald Hunt (1975-96). Excellent speeches were made by both the Mayor and Adrian. A copy of the Mayor's speech is re-produced at the end of this newsletter. Adrian's speech was a fascinating look back at WFCS's long history, spiced with his inimitable brand of wit! The evening finished with a raffle of generously donated gifts that raised over £400 for the society's funds. Do look at all the photos posted on the Facebook link on our website.



**Online Ticket Sales.** I'm very pleased to tell you that this facility is now up and running on our website. My thanks to David Norledge and Judy Jenkins for their enormous help in getting this scheme going. However tickets can still be bought direct from Judy, prior to rehearsals.

**Programme for the Dream of Gerontius.** As this is our Gala concert we took the decision to prepare a special concert programme, one which I hope all members will buy as it contains a potted history of WFCS (extracted from Mary Parson's book – *A Prevailing Passion*). Priced at a bargain £3 for members (£4 for the public), the programme also has tributes and messages from The Mayor of Worcester, The Bishop, and from our four conductors as well. I would like to pay special thanks to Patrick and Kate Aydon for the considerable amount of work they've done on producing this 42 page booklet (it's kept them busy all summer and autumn!) and many thanks also to Mike Fardon of Osborne Books for his invaluable assistance with the typesetting.

**Summer Concert 2012 – A Celebration of Worcestershire Music.** As you know, WFCS have been invited to join forces with the Elgar Chorale to sing Elgar's *The Kingdom* in Worcester Cathedral on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, being the final concert in a series of concerts in the county celebrating Worcestershire music. Under the baton of former WFCS conductor Donald Hunt, this concert is being staged to celebrate not only Elgar's birth date but also the Queen's Diamond Jubilee that starts that weekend. In January I will be asking for names of members wishing to sing in this concert which will require an attendance of at least 4 out of 6 (weekly, Wednesday) rehearsals, starting on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Rehearsals will take place at St George's Church Hall, Sansome Place (where there is free parking !!). Soloists include Catherine Wyn-Rogers and Alan Fairs.

**Weekly Raffle.** A big thank you to Pamela and Clive Hartley for taking over the running of the weekly raffle which is an important source of income for the society. Do please support them.

**Birthday Cake.** The committee felt we should conclude our anniversary year by celebrating with some birthday cake which Sue White and friends have agreed to bake. So we're going to cut the cake during / after our final rehearsal on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December, so do please stay on for this. Any volunteers to blow out 150 candles ?!!

#### **Launch of 'Friends of WFCS'**

**Anne Renshaw**

In our Anniversary year, we are introducing a new scheme aimed at those who have loyalty to, or wish to support, the Society. The benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- 10% discount on concert tickets (purchased through WFCS)
- your name listed as a 'Friend' in concert programme
- purchase interval drinks in the Chapter House with singers
- regular updates and newsletters on the Society's activities
- invitations to WFCS social events

The annual subscription is £25 and the value of your donation to the Society can be increased by allowing us to claim Gift Aid too. The new scheme will be publicised in our forthcoming concert programme and we shall be approaching past chorus members and others who may have an interest in joining. Do you know of anyone who might like to subscribe to this scheme?

Is there a chorus member who would be willing to take on the modest requirements of administering the scheme? If you feel you can, please speak to either Mark Elliston or Anne Renshaw. Thank you.

#### **Dates for your diary, 2011 - 2012**

Autumn / Gala concert date, *The Dream of Gerontius*: 19<sup>th</sup> November

December Concert: *Messiah*: 10<sup>th</sup> December

First Rehearsal date of Spring Term: Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

Half Term break: 21<sup>st</sup> February

Quiz Night & Supper, Powick Village Hall: Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup>

Spring Concert, *St John Passion*: 24<sup>th</sup> March

Summer concert with Elgar Chorale, *The Kingdom*: June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **Message from the Librarian**

**Joan Willis**

Firstly, please remember to return copies of scores to me in the chapter House immediately after the concert (or earlier if you are not singing in the concert).

You may wish to be aware of the support that WFCS has given to the campaign organised by "Making Music", an organisation to which the Society belongs, to save the UK's largest Music Library in Wakefield - some 500,000 scores - which is in danger of being closed and the music dispersed. Our Chairman has written to protest against this action and so have I as your Librarian, on behalf of all of us who are grateful to use the resources of Wakefield Music Library, amateurs and professionals alike.

In fact we have booked to hire the music for next term - the Bach *St John Passion* - from Wakefield and if the closure goes ahead we would be one of the last music performing groups able to use this facility. We will keep you informed.

#### **Diamond and Silver Wedding anniversaries**

Quite a year for anniversaries this year ! Our congratulations go to MaryAnn Garrad (S) and Patron husband Douglas (who once sang as a Tenor with WFCS) on celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary in August and congratulations too to Sarah Giles (S) and Patron husband Adrian on their silver anniversary in September.

#### **MUSIC FOR ADVENT BY CANDLELIGHT**

Launch concert of Worcester's newest choir, the St George's Singers.

Conductor: Ian Ball Organist: George Castle

Saturday 26 November, 19:30-21:00

St George's Church, Barbourne (St George's Square, just beyond The Tything)

Admission: SPECIAL ADVANCE PURCHASE PRICE of £5 FOR WFCS MEMBERS & GUESTS (£1 for under-16s) - available from Ian Ball, Ellie Ball or Ian Pattison

All proceeds will go to the St George's Organ Restoration Appeal

Further details: <http://www.concert-diary.com/concert/303661060/Advent-Music-by-Candlelight>

## Committee Contacts

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### **Text from the Mayor's speech at the dinner, Cllr Dr David Tibbutt (taken from the Mayor's blog)**

Queen Victoria had been on the throne for 25 years. Prince Albert died in 1861 and the Queen went into a prolonged mourning. Incidentally Queen Victoria was the grand-daughter of George III who gave his portrait to the City in 1788.

"Worcester had a population of about 18,000: we now have almost six times that number. The railway had reached Worcester only 11 years earlier in 1850. This to some extent is credited to Alexander Sherriff who became Mayor in 1862. This Mayoral Chain that I wear represents the couplings between railway carriages and was given to the City by Sherriff. By the way at least two railway engines were named after Elgar. "There was no electricity in Worcester in 1861: that did not arrive until 1894.

In the Cornmarket Music Hall on 12<sup>th</sup>. June 1862, when the first Worcester Festival Choral Society concert took place, Worcester had a small population, no electric light and a Queen in mourning. But it did have a railway and I wonder how many people came from far away for this inaugural event! I wonder if the Mayor, Alexander Sherriff, had been invited: I like to think so.

The "*Worcester Herald*" reported this concert as follows: "*The hall was completely filled with a fashionable audience, and the concert in its entirety passed off remarkably well. "The Creation" ..... was performed, in which the vocalists generally performed the solos very beautifully. The choruses, too, were admirably rendered, especially "The Heavens are Telling".*

(Now wait for it!): "*Mr. Tibbut presided at the piano and Mr. J Caldicott at the harmonium. Mr. Done officiated as conductor.....the absence of the organ was severely felt: it was caused by damage from the storm of Monday, the rain and hail having penetrated the roof and unfortunately flooded the pipes.....We congratulate the Society on its first night as a great success, and an omen for good.*"

If anyone knows who this "Mr. Tibbutt" was I would be pleased to hear. Although the name is spelt exactly as mine I had never heard of him and so far have found no more information. "I assure you that the pianist was not me!!!

"As many of you must be aware Elgar, in 1877, formed a wind quintet that became known as "The Brothers Wind". Elgar played the bassoon. The first flute and leader of the quintet was a certain accountant Hubert Aloysius Leicester. He was a life-long friend of Elgar and was responsible for Elgar's being awarded the freedom of the City of Worcester in 1905. He was also closely involved with the Worcester Festival Choral Society. He was Mayor of this City five times (1904 – 05 and 1913 – 15)... a record. He later became Sir Hubert and the second president of the Worcester Rotary Club. "What is rather exciting is the discovery of a portrait of Sir Hubert in the store room of the City Library. Unfortunately it is so big I have not yet been able to bring it to the Guildhall but I do have a photograph.

"Ladies and gentlemen: Worcester is steeped in history and wherever you go you find a musical element. Long may that be so!  
Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> October 2011