

Singing is good for all of us!

Week by week Chorus members subject ourselves to the range of encouragement and reprimands from our Chorus Master – and at concerts there is the additional challenge of the laser-like, menacing stare from the conductor to keep us on our toes. Why do we as adults, many senior and experienced professionals in our respective occupations, subject ourselves to such pressures? The answer is simple – because of the twofold benefit from singing – our audience benefits and so do we as Chorus members.



“Altos, you’re flat!”
“Sopranos, you’re behind!”
“Tenors, I need more from you!”
“Basses, look up and brighten your sound!”

Singing improves health and well-being – this has been established by research. It is true of all types and levels of singing expertise. Additionally, there are well recognized associations between music and health, physical and spiritual. Singing improves self-confidence and well-being; it provides additional skills through improving breathing techniques. The shared experiences of rehearsal and performance are also beneficial and participation in singing has been shown to reduce levels of anxiety – despite the challenges of chorus masters and conductors!

Music is well recognized as a healing entity, offering support, inspiration and comfort to individuals, especially at difficult times in their lives. In radio programmes such as *Desert Island Discs* and *Private Passions*, it is notable how often participants select great vocal music as being individually significant to them. The privilege of Symphony Chorus membership is that we study, learn and perform the very music that connects with individuals – and that that connection is so often more than just “entertainment” – it enhances their health and well-being, too as can be seen from the memories below.

As a doctor, often dealing with serious illness, I can recall many situations where



music has helped individuals come to terms with and positively embrace difficult and challenging illnesses. Like others in the chorus in busy and demanding jobs the act of making music has been an essential counter-balance to the pressures we experience in our work and family life. That we are able to help others through our singing and concerts is a real privilege. A life without singing would be very dull indeed.



Dr Alistair Smith second bass



Escape ...

I joined the choir as a first soprano in 1957 when my son was one year old. I must be one of the longest serving members, although I had a gap of nine years, so my membership isn't continuous. I was one of the first ladies to be allowed to sing while pregnant. Before, ladies went into confinement for a long, long time. We were singing Bach's B minor Mass while I was pregnant with my daughter. Just before she was born, the choir went to London to sing in the Royal Concert at the Festival Hall. I couldn't go.

Twenty-three years later, my daughter was now in the Choir, we were doing the B minor again – and she couldn't sing in it. The Chorus really saw me through my three children: it was my little escape – you can be yourself and not a mother for a while.

***Rosemary Allen* second alto**

Magic ...

There are many times when dragging myself out to a rehearsal at the end of a long working day or giving up a weekend feels a challenge, but meeting that challenge is always rewarded with another moment of musical magic.

Perspective ...

Approaching my 10th anniversary with the BSC, the Chorus has been a welcome constant through the highs and lows that modern life brings. Throughout the stress of a demanding job, the grieving process following the sad loss of close family members and the joys of family weddings and births, the absolute concentration required at rehearsals and performances allows mental respite and gives perspective.

***Miranda Dollen* first soprano**

Friendship ...

My favourite trip was probably to Israel because it fascinated me and by that time I had good friendships within the choir. I wasn't intending to go because my husband had been ill, but he was well enough and we hired a car and travelled around. So the holiday time was fabulous. By then, Margaret Burdett was a firm friend and although we've both since lost our husbands, our friendship remains and we've pulled each other through. If the Chorus means anything to me, it is as the refuge to which I turned and found real support. The one thing I never gave up through the days of nursing my husband was my singing: my rehearsals and concerts. He supported that and I've never regretted it. I went straight back after he died and I've told that to others. It's a testament to music, it's a bond that unites, that brings people together.

***Joan Ingarfield* second alto**

Out of Africa: A Sanctus and a Life Belt



David Fanshawe

Carolyn & Sandrey Date first encountered David Fanshawe at the Royal Albert Hall when he presented African Sanctus. David Willcocks was conducting, the place was packed out, and the atmosphere was terrific. The music was like nothing they had ever heard before – totally unexpected, original, unique. They went back to Bournemouth, and told the choir committee – then still the Bournemouth Municipal Choir – of this amazing new choral work. They took up the idea, and in March 1980, Owain Arwel Hughes conducted in the choir's first performance of African Sanctus. David came and gave a highly entertaining talk in the first half of the concert – in full explorer rig – and assisted with the sound for the second half. By that time the choir had become the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus. The concert was such a success with both choir and audience that the Chorus was able to pay off its debts from the previous season when we had performed the War Requiem! Another performance was given a couple of years later in the Poole Proms, again under Owain. This time, however, David was in the South Pacific and could not be with us, but sent an atmospheric message with sounds of the waves lapping on the shore.

David came to our next performance, given at the Bournemouth International Music Festival, in 1993, and was so impressed with the accuracy of our singing that he told the Winter Gardens:

"It is not often that a composer hears all the notes he has written as he has written them, but I did tonight!"

David Fanshawe's 'African Sanctus', for so long a 'work in progress', had first been recorded by Philips Records in 1975 when the piece had been known as 'African Revelations'. Now, the composer wanted to produce a new, definitive recording. David admired Neville Creed highly as a choir trainer and musician. So, he gave the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus the privilege of singing in this recording that occurred at the Poole Arts Centre (now Lighthouse) over a weekend. It was meticulously planned.

Neville Creed conducted, Wilhelmenia Fernandez sang the soprano, Kwasi Asare Kantamanto played the traditional drums, and, a nice touch, the choristers of St George's Chapel Choir (where David had been a member of the choir school) sang the Lord's Prayer. As a recording session, it was incredibly exciting, tremendous hard work and totally exhilarating. When it was all over, David threw a party at his hotel in Poole for the instrumentalists and a number of the choral singers, and a good time was had by all.

This event made the members of the choir feel that they had become friends of David and his wife, Jane, and before long, the Chorus was planning to export Sanctus (& David!) to America. This took place in October 1995. Excerpts were performed at Epcot, Disney World in Florida, and a full performance was given at Rollins College Chapel in Winter Park City – a first half of mainly unaccompanied British music from Byrd to Britten, and then African Sanctus. It was a stunning success. To date, the Chorus has performed in Sanctus ten times – including helping out at the Royal Ballet School, Radley College and Canford Summer School.



Sadly, David Fanshawe died on the 5th July 2010 following a stroke. He left inimitable legacy of scores and his infectious energy and joie de vivre made an unforgettable impact on all who encountered him, not least the members of the **Bournemouth Symphony Chorus**. After the news broke at a rehearsal, the choir gave David a series of Mexican waves and ullulations, an unusual but appropriate send-off for a truly remarkable man.



POST CARD

from **Betty Thomas**
second soprano



Another tour took us to Orlando, Florida, where we performed in the American pavilion at Epcot. We were fetched from our hotel by coach and taken in via a special entrance for artistes (or "guests") before the general public were allowed in. We sang in stifling heat, and as we came off stage we were each given lovely iced water and a fluffy white towel to mop our fevered brows! We also had free entry tickets and food vouchers.



POST CARD

from **John Harper**
second bass



visits abroad increased the sociability within the choir, for home schedules left little time to fraternise with each other. In spite of this, some very interesting liaisons developed between the sexes within choir circles.

Our visit to America for a week of some eighty members of the chorus, staying in Orlando and singing both at Rollins College and Disney World, the latter being an unaccompanied concert, proved great fun and whetted our appetites for more such visits in the future.

BSC Recording African Sanctus, February 1994 - by Jane Fanshawe

We all experience 'Watershed' moments in our lives, the before and after of that BSC recording weekend in February 1994! It was a celebration, a 'Harambee', a happening of dedicated choral singing and indeed a landmark moment in our musical lives.

David was so excited about it all, in preparation - thinking about committing his creation African Sanctus, to a definitive recording. You were the chorus he chose, and combined with his favourite loyal ensemble, the master drummer Kwasi Asare Kantamanto, soloist Wilhelmenia Fernandez from USA and choristers from St Georges', Windsor Castle, his old school. These were forces meeting in the perfect recording ambiance of The Lighthouse with sound engineers he could truly trust, including Michael McCarthy. Silva Screen Records were lined up to release the album at the end of the year. But above all he mixed live performance with his beloved African recordings. It was all done live to tape, testament to time, stressing the importance of preserving Authentic African traditional music, in celebration on the concert platform.

The Lighthouse stage in flat floor recording mode expanded out into the auditorium with loads of room to spread for all the percussion and ensemble. I remember vividly the coloured shirts, the film cameras, Gary Kettel and his bananas, the kit drum hut, Kwasi beating drums which were taller than him. The red light on, then off, on, off, on off. Neville and his telephone, 17 takes of No 3 The Gloria, 1 take of David's piano solo (he played it in

one with no errors!). 1,000 cups of tea later (made by David's son Alex), glucose sweets and 15 hours of singing and recording time, it was finally 'in the can'.

David singing / demonstrating with his challenging energy, emerging from the production room, leaping on to the stage, every line had to be 'covered', every word had to be



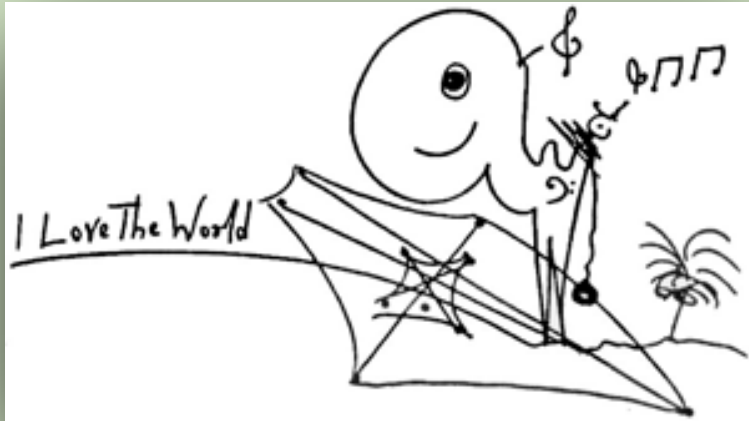
heard - from the tenors in the Kyrie, to the Altos high notes resolving in the Crucifixus, to the Shouted Gloria, the ululating sopranos in the Credo and the spiritual sound of the Et in Spiritum, to the gutsy basses of the rolling Sanctus movements. The recording schedule was carefully planned - we aimed at approx. 2 movements per 3 hours session (You are lucky if you can put down 15 minutes of music in 1 session). The centre piece recording was David's new work Dona Nobis Pacem - a hymn for World Peace. I remember watching David with tears streaming down his face, as this was a premiere for him.

Neville was unbelievable - he never missed a beat with headphones on or off (in the cappella sections). His conducting inspired you all to give your utmost throughout the dynamic contrasts of the work. It was a magnificent achievement for all concerned, galvanising the spirit to greatness and completion. Above all it was a united choral sound, as David describes in his score "A wall of Sound - with power, rhythm and Absolute Energy." You truly reached that.

During post-production, the selections were all middle in David's Wiltshire studio, - which take to use- for every single bar of the work. It was ears, ears, ears, WHAT take to use, where to edit, what take had that X-factor, what would fit, manuscripts, David's charts, clearly marked with RED pen. The masterful editing (272 edits) was all completed by Mike Ross Trevor in Whitfield St. David spent much of that summer filming in Thailand, India, Fiji and Tanzania, so it made for an interesting year. The editing and overdubs and final mix down took about 6 months fitted in between David's travels. Then we heard a yes (at 3-days notice) from BBC TV to revisit the work on film, combining original footage from the 1975 BBC film with performance at the Premiere.

It was a huge leap of faith for David, a personal financial commitment but one he never regretted and a recording that is still selling 20 years later. You certainly earned your place in the history books of African Sanctus.

Jane Fanshawe



David was a remarkable and idiosyncratic ethno-musicologist. The pictogram above is his logo. This is how David explains it and perhaps, sums up his lifestyle and raison d'être:

"It has been a wonderful journey and I suppose the 'Hippo Man', Bwala Dancers, the camel and my 'Spirit Cap' blessed by the witch doctors on the Hill of Eternity in Masailand, are all part of the secret of living and creating. That is why I sign my name and always draw a camel. In the head of the camel is a treble clef and in the base of the camel there is a bass clef! Fanshawe is to be seen riding, somewhat precariously, on the back of the camel dreaming up music. On his head is the 'Spirit Cap' which originally came from Folkestone Harbour in 1968. The camel has a tail and the desert has a palm tree and my message written in the sand is simply "I Love the World".

[source: Chappell's Vocal Score of African Sanctus.]

from **Donald Sheppard** **second tenor**

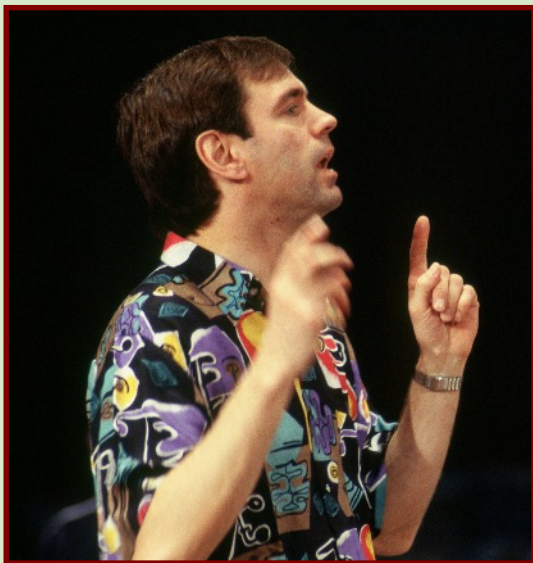
*The last concert given by the Bournemouth Municipal Choir was Britten's **War Requiem** in June 1979. These were the days when the Choir promoted the concerts and hired the BSO and soloists, etc. After this expensive event, we owed the BSO a considerable sum which was outstanding when we became the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus in September, after which the BSO promoted the concerts. We decided that we should put on a concert to try and pay off our debt and decided on David Fanshawe's **African Sanctus** which did not require a full orchestra, only two guitars, piano, percussion and tape.*

*I had taken over the job of Hon Secretary from Edwin Lediard Smith, and this was my first challenge. We had sung under Owain Arwel Hughes on a number of occasions and I had his recording of **African Sanctus** so I telephoned and asked if he would conduct. He agreed and then I sought his advice on what to do next. He gave me David Fanshawe's telephone number and suggested I rang him. David's response was amazing. He told me all I needed to know, who to contact for the tape recording, where to get scores and practise tapes and, of course, he would take part and also introduce the work at the concert. Meanwhile I contacted the guitarists and pianist who were on the recording, and asked the BSO to provide the percussion instruments and players. The members of the Chorus became very enthusiastic, with the result that we*



attracted an audience of over 1,700 in the Winter Gardens and made our peace with the BSO management. We also struck up a firm friendship with David Fanshawe which lasted until his untimely death a short time ago.

Two amusing incidents regarding the performance. An hour before the concert I met David backstage desperately looking for a two pin socket in which he could plug in his electric razor. There were none. However, I knew of an electric kettle and the lead for that ended in a two pin socket. (All part of the Secretary's job!). The other incident was that, during his introduction to the music, he discovered a pair of gloves on the chair to be used by the soloist (I am sure he had put them there himself). He then looked up at the chorus saying "Where's the Secretary?" and then threw them to me - I was in the second row. The gloves parted during flight but, thanks to experience on the cricket field, I caught both of them, one in each hand! (My younger son, then aged thirteen, thought that this was the highpoint of the evening.) At the end of the concert I realized David's reason for spotting me because he handed out various bottles and flowers on stage as presents to those involved.



The first African Sanctus: Owain Arwel Hughes, March 1980

The Choir's first performance of African Sanctus took place just after we had become the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus. We had a large deficit from performing Britten's War Requiem in 1979 and this was seen as a way of promoting an interesting concert but a less expensive one. I was asked if I would sing the soprano solo. I was expecting my third child, and I have vivid memories of spending eleven weeks in hospital before the arrival of the baby in January, with a score of African Sanctus on my bedside. The Hippo Man on the cover always provoked conversation with my consultant!

This concert was a new experience – it was the first time I had to use a microphone, and it was a shock to come on stage for the rehearsal to find the stage almost empty apart from lots of cables and a lone mike – for me! It was a very different experience for us all – we had never seen a conductor wearing headphones before, and singing with a backing group and to a row of technicians was quite different from singing with an orchestra. At the end of the concert, David Fanshawe presented flowers to me, and he showered the audience with daffodils.

Margaret Burdett *first soprano*



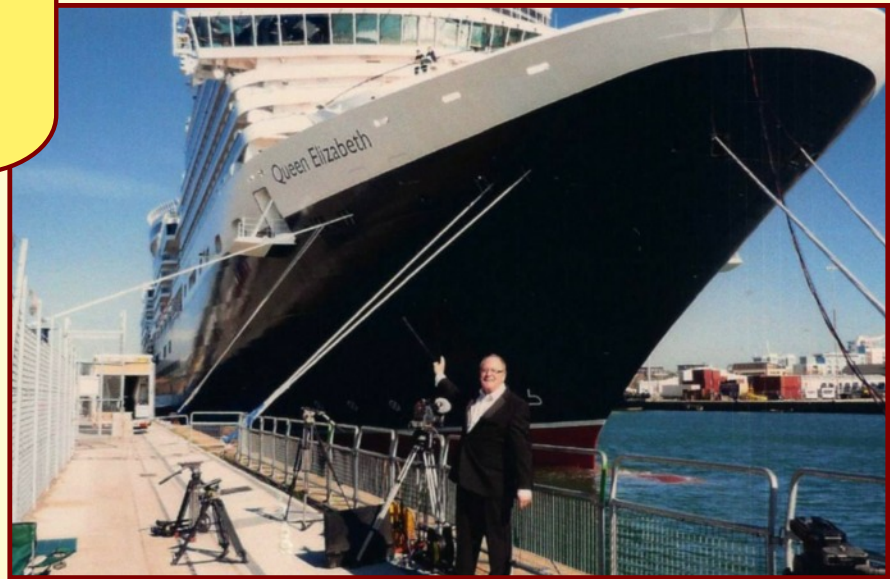
The View from the Bridge or Ask the Woman in the Yellow Pants

Carolyn Date, Chorus Manager

I had been singing in the Chorus for about 15 years when Donald Sheppard asked me if I would be interested in being nominated for the role of Secretary as he wanted to retire from it. I had been planning a career change and was in the middle of a postgraduate qualification so I told him I couldn't consider it for at least three years. He said that suited his timescale and I thought no more about it until three years later like Mephistopheles, he called in the promise.

I was elected at the next AGM but at the very same time the Chorus was undergoing a re-audition process with a view to improve performance standards. The Chorus membership fell from 180+ to 121 overnight and of those, 38 singers were given a notice to improve. This dramatic pruning caused a great deal of bad feeling, particularly as one of the casualties was the Membership Secretary who, unhappy with her treatment, wrote a very de-motivating letter to the remaining membership. My first task was to deal with the impact of that letter to ensure that we still had a functioning Chorus at the end of that month. This was at a time when email was rare and most mass communication was by post. I had been told by one singer who was not asked to leave, that she would not stay in such a heartless organisation. So that reduced it to 120. ***Not an easy start.***

That experience is one still referred to by singers today as ***The Night of the Long Knives***, and probably demonstrates the biggest difference between the BSC and other local choirs. The Chorus has a close relationship with the BSO and this requires a constant drive for improvement and to be ever more flexible in our response to what is needed through the BSO programme. The Chorus re-assesses constantly – there have been at least 3 major re-auditioning sessions since then, but I feel that they have been managed more circumspectly and less publicly since that one. Members of the Chorus are constantly reminded by the Committee and BSO that it is not a choral society but we have to ensure that people feel valued as individuals and remain supportive of the Chorus and Orchestra when they leave or retire. Their departure may be before they would wish, and this is highlighted elsewhere in this account in Victor Thomas' excellent address to the 2002 AGM. This is a tricky issue for us and one which is being addressed in the review of our Friends organisation.



The Chorus performed when the new liner Queen Elizabeth was named at Southampton by the Queen

The Chorus Manager role incorporates strategic planning and ensuring that Chorus operations run smoothly. There is a huge wealth of talent in the Chorus and members are encouraged to get involved and use their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the organisation and not just on the Committee.

This will include aspects of stage management, website management, membership, music distribution, publicity, helping with events and supporting the Youth Chorus operations as chaperones and also fundraising. Strategic planning involves programmes and projects which develop both Choruses, commissions and looking at the way the Chorus functions and what changes might be needed in the organisation to meet future challenges.

The BSC has commissioned more works in the last ten years than in the previous ninety and has had a regular programme of tours. During the centenary season the Chorus performed many new works, usually composed especially for the BSC and BSYC and we visited Chicago to perform our newest commission *Not In Our Time* to an audience of around 5000. Our centenary season is reproduced elsewhere in this account and demonstrates the volume of work and new work undertaken this year.

Our history shows that Dan Godfrey encouraged early performances of new works and English composers. We follow this principle in our commissions and on our foreign tours we make a point of promoting our own culture though programming English music, and often only English music. Our tours are self organised as most of our tours involve orchestral concerts, preferably as a result of an invitation as in the Florida, Israel, Czech Republic and Chicago tours, or through sponsorship as in the Italy and imminent German tours. This takes a certain amount of



effort in preparation and on tour (the yellow pants quote came from a school bus driver looking for me in Chicago) but a good working relationship with the Treasurer and Committee makes a huge difference! Another aspect of forward planning is to encourage

young singers both in the BSYC and in the Chorus. The future health of the BSC depends on new singers which is why we attach so much importance to this work and to our community work with partners such as Lighthouse in The BIG Sing each year which attracts over 350 local people to a workshop day to work with BSO players as well as BSC members.

Managing the relationship with the BSO, which is expressed within a formal agreement, is one of the biggest challenges. Both organisations were founded by Sir Dan Godfrey, the BSO in 1893 and the Municipal Choir in 1911 but in the current financial climate, having a partnership for choral concerts means that programmes are mostly a compromise for both parties. Balancing the Chorus Programme with the BSO and other work and tours is never ending.

Ensuring that a full and varied programme is offered to singers each season is an significant part of my role as is working with a great number of different conductors. One of the most exciting to work with was Richard Hickox and the Chorus rated him as the very best.



He was unfailingly polite but very demanding in pursuit of excellence and the Delius *Mass of Life* [see above] was a high point for us all. We worked a lot with him on very rewarding projects in the 80s and 90s but his appointment to BBCNOW had clauses about exclusivity which reduced his work elsewhere. Our 90th anniversary concert carried a greeting from him which referred to his restrictions and hopes that he would work more with the Chorus in future.

His unexpected, sudden death in 2008 was shocking and the musical world lost a great talent and English music a great champion, still much missed today.

Personal Highlights

Andrew Litton's Mahler **2nd Symphony** and Name the Train

Winning a Grammy Award for Best Choral Performance with **Belshazzar's Feast**

John Adams' **Harmonium** with Kees Bakels.

The Mass of Life in St Paul's Cathedral under Richard Hickox

Mahler **8th Symphony** in Bath with Jason Thornton, and at the Royal Albert Hall with Ivor Setterfield.

Showboat with Wayne Marshall

Porgy and Bess with Andrew Litton

Carmina Burana with Richard Hickox at the BBC Proms

Voices of Exile at the Royal Festival Hall (and meeting Alan Rickman!)

Not in Our Time in Chicago

Mirror of Perfection in Assisi

Recording **African Sanctus** with Neville and David Fanshawe.

The Armed Man with the film and Greg Beardsell on Remembrance Sunday.

African Sanctus in Florida

Verdi **Requiem** with Owain Arwel Hughes in the Winter Gardens (no interval for the first time).

Singing Bach's **B minor Mass** for the first time.

The Apostles with Charles Groves

Barbican weekend under Richard Hickox when we sang **The Kingdom** and **The Apostles**

Singing Carols next to Emma Kirkby in Sherborne Abbey, especially when she joined in!

Going to the pub with David Fanshawe

David Rendall singing **Ness'un Dorma** to the pre BSYC Youth Workshop

BSYC singing **The Owl and the Pussy-Cat** at David Fanshawe's memorial concert

Near Disasters

The Planets choir – getting lost in Portsmouth whilst trying to find their place backstage

Triumphlied under Marin Alsop (q.v.)

A power cut in the Lower Basilica in Assisi bringing the TUTTI rehearsal to an early end

Losing 11 sopranos from a partner Chorus between recording sessions

Finding an antiquated sound system in the Chapel at Winter Park where we were singing **African Sanctus**

A baritone soloist in a recording who could not sing in tune in his cues

A six-hour flight delay at Gatwick on our way to Israel with a party of 150

Neville almost losing his **cool** when the verger cut short our rehearsal in Siena

An identified person who unbeknown to us, between rehearsal and concert, unplugged the power to headphones for the conductor in **Pacific Song** at Poole.

All those moments when I realise the coach is going to be late

Part of the stage collapsing under the Chorus during a rehearsal in Ghent Cathedral

The orchestral manager forgetting the video camera for **The Planets** in Basingstoke

Edwin Lediard Smith's relatives taking much of the Chorus archive to the dump when clearing his house

Security staff at Meyrick Park flatly refusing to let the ladies' chorus for **The Planets** into the orchestra enclosure.

Stanley B. Arthur

Stanley Arthur joined the Municipal Choir at its inception. He served with relentless vigour and dedication far beyond the time when he was "the last founder standing". Short of stature, he was long on courage and leadership. No job was too menial to undertake, and no problem too great to overcome for "Stanley's" Choir, even when his hands were full rallying the public to support the Bournemouth Orchestra during its crisis in the 1950's. Stanley led his men from the top: he was a first tenor with a clear, high voice which he maintained in good order well into his 70's. Fellow tenors have described how they could see Stanley's neck muscles pumping support to his vocal cords. 25 years after the Choir had been forced to its knees, here's how Stanley described, in his own, laconic manner, those events and his role:

"...the choir, which had shut down at the commencement of the last war, was facing one of its most critical periods. The quiet of the phoney war and the introduction of daylight saving had encouraged the committee to restart with a summer and autumn season. Our recently appointed conductor [Herbert Pierce] had proved unpopular but the interest of Dr [Reginald] Jacques had been secured and he generously agreed to accept the conductorship. It was decided to hold the first rehearsal at St Paul's, Holy Trinity being unavailable on Tuesday 15th April, 1940. We recommenced with a new conductor, new chorus-master, Reginald Goodall and Mr Austin Dewdney as accompanist. The programme consisted of A Sea Symphony, Verdi's Requiem and the Mass in B Minor. Dr Jacques, himself, came down [from London] for the first rehearsal. My predecessor, Mr Arthur Cherrett, had found conditions too much for him after 25 years of loyal and efficient service. Mr Goodall proved unacceptable [he sat down during rehearsals, much to the fury of the ladies on the Committee] and eventually Mr Cyril Knight was



appointed. When he was called up, Mr Dewdney took over until his return and rendered loyal and efficient service. As I was fully conversant with the running of the choir, I consented to combine the duties of chairman and Hon. Secretary until a suitable appointment could be made, and here I still am."

Stanley became Mr Fix-It. Away from music, Stanley was Headmaster of St Paul's Church of England Primary School near Bournemouth Central Station from 1931 until retirement in 1949. When the Choir was homeless in 1940, he smoothed its move to "his" Church Hall. It was cramped, cold and damp, but it was cheap and always available. It wasn't long before Mr Arthur had to sort out the conductor-ship as Reginald Jacques found travelling to Bournemouth in war-time too onerous. Stanley's wife provided a meal for soloists after concerts and one day Stanley and baritone soloist Roy Henderson were striding up Bath Hill towards refreshment when Stanley inquired, innocently *"You do a bit of conducting, Mr Henderson, how would you like to take on our Choir?"*

The right question at the right time. Roy Henderson had taken up conducting before the War and had broadcast with his Nottingham Oriana Choir, the first British amateur group to sing without copies. Roy Henderson accepted - but Stanley didn't realise that at around that time, Roy had become Kathleen Ferrier's teacher and she was to become Roy's and Bournemouth's *Angel*.

Stanley Arthur stood for duty and service. His credo shines through his introduction, as Chairman of the Winter Gardens Society, to *The New Deal*, the compact that created the Symphony Orchestra

out of the ashes of the Municipal Orchestra:
"... We must all be prepared to dip our hands a bit further into our pockets and to pay rather more for something we have learnt to value. Only so can this magnificent effort (on which a few devoted people have spent so much time and thought) be made to succeed. Success is within our grasp. We must not let it slip through our fingers either by thoughtlessness, slackness or a reluctance to make such sacrifices as are necessary to keep the orchestra in being."

Stanley Arthur died in 1972 having completed 61 years as a leading tenor in the Choir. He acted as its Chairman for 5 years and its Honorary Secretary for a further 30. The Choir performed in memoriam and in gratitude. His services to music extended far beyond Bournemouth. Outside music, Stanley was a founder of the Richmond Park Tennis Club, a fine rugger player who represented Hampshire and a peerless gardener.

POST CARD



*from Donald Sheppard,
second tenor*

The Municipal Choir always attended the Annual Remembrance Sunday Parade at the Bournemouth War Memorial in the upper Pleasure Gardens. As singers have other commitments, it was not easy for the Secretary, Stanley Arthur to obtain a good turn-out. Because of my church duties, I could rarely make it. One November, it must have been in the 1970s, I could do so and I told Stanley that I'd be there, for once. He replied that he'd been to every one of them. I thought that remarkable - the War Memorial having been erected in 1921.



Greg Beardsell, Chorus Master 2004 - 2009

Greg's strength was in vocal production, an extensive knowledge of which was utilised to bolster and refine the Chorus's tone colour. The Chorus took a gamble by appointing him, as he was relatively inexperienced but what he had done in choral training was highly significant. He had studied at Chetham's School of Music, played the tuba and had conducted Schola Cantorum and other skilled chamber ensembles as well as being an Associate Conductor of the National Youth Choir (NYC). During his time with the Chorus Greg was also appointed as the Associate Artistic Director of the NYC and Director of the Wooburn Singers following in the footsteps of Richard Hickox and Jeremy Backhouse. He also worked at the Endellion Festival with Richard Hickox and was appointed as Director of the Ulster Youth Choir.

Throughout his time with us, he worked hard on sound and precision in performance and definitely changed the tone quality and sound the Chorus made. He both trained and conducted the choir in concerts – **Mirror of Perfection**, Carols etc, and on tour in Prague and Brno. One of his finest moments came in concert at Lighthouse with the Dorset Youth Orchestra, when he gave with the BSC the official premiere of David Fanshawe's **Pacific Song**, and conducted a stunning performance of Karl Jenkins' **The Armed Man** on Remembrance Sunday.

Sandrey Date, Music Adviser, **second bass**



Greg Beardsell, left, with David Fanshawe, pictured in Worcester

Starters

Having entered a Jamie Oliver restaurant with my grandchildren, they asked me to play the singing game I had taught them some three years ago. It was the surprise starter that Greg often served up, as one of his fun warm-ups that I so loved "*Algie met the bear and the bear met Algie*". It reminded me that when music is on the menu, what connections it makes and what delight it brings.

Paula Finn, **second soprano**

Greg had a very expressive conducting style and the Chorus responded to his interpretations. I remember asking him at interview if he would mind handing over the baton to staff conductors – a real challenge for trainers of symphony choruses who also conduct themselves. He said he didn't mind not being on the podium all the time at that stage in his career but he might feel differently in 5 years time. And he was spot on with the timing – he worked on some very important projects such as Marin Alsop's **Carmina Burana** and **The Creation** with Kees Bakels, but was at his best for some wonderful concerts he conducted including English music in St Nicholas' Church in Prague, and a memorable performance of **Mirror of Perfection** and the Faure **Requiem** in Wimborne Minster, towards the end of his time with the Chorus.

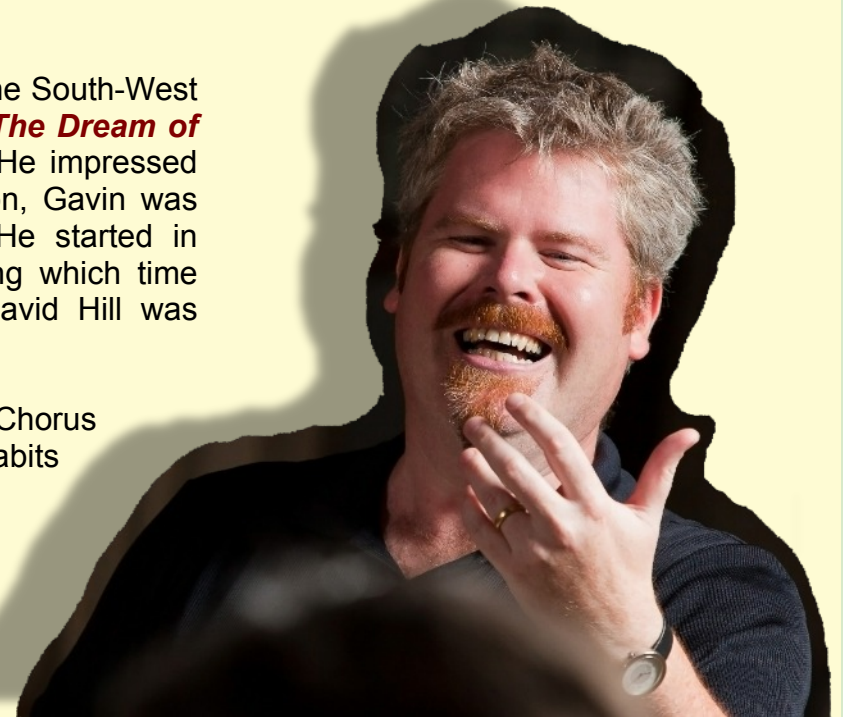
Carolyn Date, Secretary & Chorus Manager, **second soprano**

Gavin Carr, Chorus Master

Gavin Carr came onto the Chorus's radar when several members joined a tour by the South-West Festival Chorus to China, where they gave the first two performances in China of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Gavin was Chorus Master and baritone soloist at the same Time. He impressed in both roles. When later that summer, Greg Beardsell tendered his resignation, Gavin was invited to tide us over as Chorus-Master until an appointment could be made. He started in September, and it was intended that he should be in post until Christmas during which time discussions were taking place with the BSO about a suitable replacement. David Hill was representing the BSO in the selection process.

By October, however, it became clear that there was overwhelming support among Chorus members for Gavin's role to be made permanent. As both David Hill and Kirill Karabits were in support of his appointment, he was confirmed in post.

Gavin brought a big personality to the job. There was humour, enthusiasm and Passion, complemented by a wonderful singing voice. Gavin had graduated from being a choral scholar in the Choir of King's College, Cambridge to a career in opera and concerts as a baritone, performing from Santiago to Shanghai.



*Sandrey Date, Music Advisor, **second bass***



Nobody warned us about Gavin

Nobody warned us that our in-boxes would be swamped with long lyrical letters after every concert.

Nobody warned us that we should hide our sweeties, or that he had a naughty sense of humour and enjoyed sharing it with us all!

Nobody warned us that we needed to comprehend at least five languages to understand his instructions, or that we were going to be pushed to produce near-perfect results all the time.

Nobody warned us that he had such a good memory for names that we would no longer be able to hide in the shadows and be anonymous.

Thank goodness nobody warned us!

*Jacky Legg **first soprano***

I knew nothing of Gavin Carr before I joined BSC, but what an absolute privilege it is to work with him. I have met some inspirational musicians in my time, yet from the very first voice audition, the first practice at the lighthouse on a Tuesday singing under his direction in performances, I knew that he would inspire me to fulfil my musical, especially choral, ambitions. I admire his professionalism and dedication to musical excellence. So, sometimes he's strict and his emotions may flare, but always justifiably! His passion is undeniably strong. Balancing this, his camaraderie and sense of humour are right up my street and essential in maintaining a mutual understanding of work and play with the Chorus. I appreciate his determination to improve vocal technique in the Chorus - his teaching is excellent, his ear for ensemble immaculate, and what's more he has a fantastic singing voice. Gavin has certainly made an impact on this young musician and I'm sure that many others will benefit in the future!

Will Howard *first tenor*

Gavin inspires and stretches my singing well beyond my comfort zone to a new level of professionalism. Being a member of the BSC now is not just singing in a chorus for your own enjoyment but to be part of an influential and pace setting ensemble. That's just how I feel about the chorus now - so different from when I joined the Municipal Choir all those years ago! Rehearsing back in the Richmond Hill Lounge recently brought back a lot of memories and I am glad I had the break as the new BSC is working at a completely different level.

Joyce Hatchard *first alto*



Gavin inspires the **Big Sing** in 2010

Relative newcomers, Andrew and I were rather dismayed by the sudden need for a new chorus master. We needn't have worried; Tiger arrived! At that trial rehearsal at Shirl's place, and ever since, we have been bowled over by Gavin's extraordinary and infectious energy and enthusiasm.

Any concerns for the future of the Chorus evaporated in the whirlwind; rather we have been swept into his irresistible vortex, sometimes slightly breathless, but never bored. His experience and confidence will surely lead us 'onwards and upwards', to use his favourite phrase! **Avanti!**

Penny Bellars *second soprano*



Gavin toasts 100 years of Choir & Chorus



"Attacca! Avanti!" commands Gavin - the stage leader sporting the *maillot jaune*. This Chorus Master knows his Segways from his Segues.

Thomas James Crawford B Mus FRCO

Thomas Crawford succeeded Henry Holloway as Chorus Master in 1914.

Thomas Crawford was born in 1877 in Barrhead, Scotland and studied music in Glasgow and under Carl Reinecke in Leipzig where he won a first prize. Whilst in Germany he met Brahms, an event he retold with relish in later years. Thomas Crawford was a brilliant organist, and capable of playing the piano well enough to support string players in duo sonatas. Early in his career, he transcribed Wagner for the organ. Crawford was deputy to Frederick Bridge at Westminster Abbey for seven years from 1895. Thomas had a dapper appearance. He had dark, wavy hair, heavy eyebrows bushed over lightly framed spectacles and, as an Edwardian gentleman should, he sported a small moustache. In 1911, he became the organist-choirmaster of St Michael's Church, Chester Square, London. Thomas Crawford was a fine organ recitalist and he played on many organs across the capital as well as hosting visits by famous organists, such as Alexandre Guilmant.

His ***Symphonic Suite*** was played at the Winter Gardens by the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra under Dan Godfrey. Crawford moved to Bournemouth to teach at Hamilton Law's Bournemouth Conservatoire of Music. Later, in 1914, Thomas Crawford was appointed to replace Henry Holloway as Chorus Master. His appointment received unanimous approval from the Municipal Choir's committee and the endorsement of Dan Godfrey. The terms stated that Crawford was to receive "not more than £40 per season". When patriotism was at its height in 1916, Crawford ensured that a piece by his mentor, Frederick



Bridge, the cantata ***The Flag of England*** was sung by the Municipal Choir alongside Elgar's ***The Banner of St George***. Thanks to the first World War, Crawford and Holloway played *Cox & Box* and when the younger man accepted the draft to serve his country in 1917, Henry Holloway replaced him for two years. Thomas then returned for a further two year stint.

Relations between Thomas Crawford and the choir's Hon. Sec., Mr H. A. Kettle, were uneasy. This can be seen in an AGM minute from 1916:

"Mr Crawford then publicly shook hands with Mr Kettle on the platform to show he had no personal ill-feeling and Mr Kettle as heartily returned the friendly gesture."

Crawford decided to emigrate and he moved to Toronto in December 1922 to take up posts as a church organist and teacher at the Conservatoire of Music. Crawford became Conductor of the Eaton Choral Society in 1927.

Eaton's was a department store, the Harrods of Canada, and on its 7th floor, its owner built what may have been the finest 1200 seater, modern auditorium in the world. It was the acme of Art Deco, designed by a leading French architect and its huge foyer was a delight in itself with a fountain by Lalique set within an "Ocean Liner" context. Crawford became a naturalised Canadian citizen in 1928. Early in the 1930s, Crawford transformed his Choral Society into the Eaton Operatic Society and it produced each of five Gilbert and Sullivan Operettas twice before Crawford finally retired in 1947. Incidentally, it was in Eaton's auditorium that Glenn Gould made his professional debut, both on the piano and the organ.

In retirement, Crawford published a book, ***Keyboard Harmony and Transposition*** (Toronto 1952). His last position was at St Andrew's Church, Barrie, in 1954. Thomas Crawford died in 1955 following a car accident.

Crawford's works include a popular ***Toccata in F*** (1903), ***Scherzo for Flutes***, and ***In a Great Cathedral*** for organ, and several Operettas for children. A ***Piano Trio*** and a ***Scottish Suite*** for strings are apprentice works from his Leipzig days. ***Variations on an Original Theme*** for orchestra dates from his early Toronto years. He also composed songs & ballads under the nom de plume of ***Guy Stevens***.

Kathleen Ferrier



KATHLEEN
FERRIER

THE MUNICIPAL CHOIR AND MUNICIPAL ORCHESTRA

present "The DREAM of GERONTIUS" (ELGAR)

SUNDAY, 30th NOVEMBER, 1947 at 7.30

Soloists :

KATHLEEN FERRIER, Contralto
HEDDLE NASH, Tenor
WILLIAM PARSONS, Bass

Conductor :

ROY HENDERSON

*Farewell, but not for ever ! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow ;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.*

12. INTRODUCTION.
13. TENOR SOLO (Soul) : *I went to sleep ; and now I am refreshed.*
14. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *My work is done, my task is o'er.*
15. DIALOGUE (Angel and Soul) : *All hail, my child and brother, hail.*
16. CHORUS (Demons) : *Low-born clods of brute earth.*
17. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *It is the restless pining of their being.*
18. CHORUS (Demons) : *The mind bold and independent.*
19. DIALOGUE (Soul and Angel) : *I see not those false spirits.*
20. CHORUS (Angelicals) : *Praise to the Holiest in the height.*
21. TENOR SOLO (Soul) : *The sound is like the rushing of the wind.*
22. CHORUS (Angelicals) : *Glory to Him.*
23. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *They sing of thy approaching agony.*
24. TENOR SOLO (Soul) : *But hark ! a grand mysterious harmony.*
25. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *And now the threshold, as we traverse it,
Utters aloud its glad responsive chant.*
26. CHORUS (Angelicals) : *Praise to the Holiest in the height.*
27. DIALOGUE (Angel and Soul) : *Thy judgement now is near.*
28. BASS SOLO (Angel of the Agony) : *Jesu, by that shuddering dread
which fell on Thee.*
29. CHORUS (Voices on Earth) : *Be merciful, be gracious ; spare him, Lord.*
30. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *Praise to His name.*
31. TENOR SOLO (Soul) : *Take me away.*
32. CHORUS (Souls in Purgatory) : *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge.*
33. CONTRALTO SOLO (Angel) : *Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul.*
34. CHORUS (Souls in Purgatory) : *Lord, Thou hast been our refuge.*
35. CHORUS (Angelicals) : *Praise to the Holiest.*



HEDDLE
NASH



WILLIAM
PARSONS

PART I
Gerontius, no wanton sinner nor visionary saint, but in the composer's conception a normal and rather worldly man, dying, prays for mercy on his soul and asserts his belief in the tenets of his Church. His agony increases as he senses the approach of death. While the assistants are praying for him, he collapses. As soon as his death is realized, the priest pronounces the *Proficiscere*. Gerontius passes.

1. PRELUDE. The Orchestra.
2. TENOR SOLO (Gerontius) : *Jesu, Maria, I am near to death.*
3. CHORUS (Assistants) : *Kyrie Eleison.*
4. TENOR SOLO (Gerontius) : *Rouse thee, my fainting soul.*
5. CHORUS (Assistants) : *Be merciful, be gracious ; spare him, Lord.*
6. TENOR SOLO (Gerontius) : *Sanctus fortis, Sanctus Deus.*
7. TENOR SOLO (Gerontius) : *I can no more.*
8. CHORUS (Assistants) : *Rescue him, O Lord, in this his evil hour.*
9. TENOR SOLO (Gerontius) : *Novissima hora est.*
10. BASS SOLO (The Priest) : *Proficiscere anima Christiana.*
11. CHORUS (Assistants) : *Go, in the name of Angels and Archangels.*

INTERVAL—Light Refreshments may be obtained in the Cafe

PART II
The soul of Gerontius, awakened into a new sense, moves, yet without seeming to move, towards a waiting Angel. The wonder of all this incites him to question the Angel. The dialogue is interrupted by the hubbub of demons waiting to seize their prey after the judgement. The din ceases and the dialogue is resumed. Then a new sound floats down, the voices of those who are in communion with God. The Angel speaks to Gerontius's spirit, warning him that the moment of judgement is near. The Angel of the Agony is found interceding for tormented souls. Gerontius, through the spirit, looks on God. The sight strikes him with awe and a piercing sense of his own unreadiness. The Angel, waiting there, catches him, bears him away, and, after a show of ritual, tenderly leaves him with a promise of revelation at the dawning of another day.

Leader of the Orchestra :
EDWARD ARMSTRONG

Chorus Master :
CYRIL KNIGHT

Accompanist :
NORA BRADBURY

POST CARD

from Donald Sheppard
second tenor



Before I joined the Choir, as a late teenager I'd been coming to the Concerts of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir and had the great pleasure of hearing Kathleen Ferrier on a number of occasions. I probably heard one of her first appearances with Roy Henderson, her teacher, as conductor. She sang in "Elijah" in the Pavilion. It was probably just before the end of WWII. Although I heard Kathleen in Gerontius two or three times, I missed Kathleen's last appearance in Bournemouth, not long before her death, as the Angel. The conductor of the Croydon Philharmonic Choir, Alan Kirby, took charge so that Roy could sing the bass solo for "his" Angel.

I remember particularly her singing in Gerontius, standing in a long, white dress, no score: because Henderson wouldn't allow her to take a score on stage. She sang wonderfully as the Angel and she looked like the Angel! That was in the Winter Gardens around 1950.

The centre pages of the utility era programme that accompanied Kathleen Ferrier's first Dream of Gerontius in Bournemouth. The conductor was Roy Henderson who had taught "*Kleever Kaff*" so much, not only about vocal technique but also the importance of communicating with the audience ("*Don't use a copy in performance, Kathleen.*") Kathleen spoke of Roy as "*The Prof*". There was a strong team of soloists with the London-born tenor, Heddle Nash, as Gerontius and William Parsons as the Priest and Angel of the Agony.

CONCERTS. The chief feature of our concerts during the past season has been the sustained excellence of the choral singing in almost every branch of which the choir showed improvement. Perhaps our best all round performance was "Gerontius" as the balance achieved by soloists, choir and orchestra was almost all that could be desired. Kathleen's Ferrier's singing of the Angel's part was really sublime and was an inspiration to all. This concert was graced by the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress who were very welcome.

From Stanley Arthur's Annual Report to the Choir in 1948

Kathleen Ferrier appeared in Bournemouth at least 17 times. Perhaps, it is appropriate that Kathleen had been born in April 1912, during the Municipal Choir's first season.

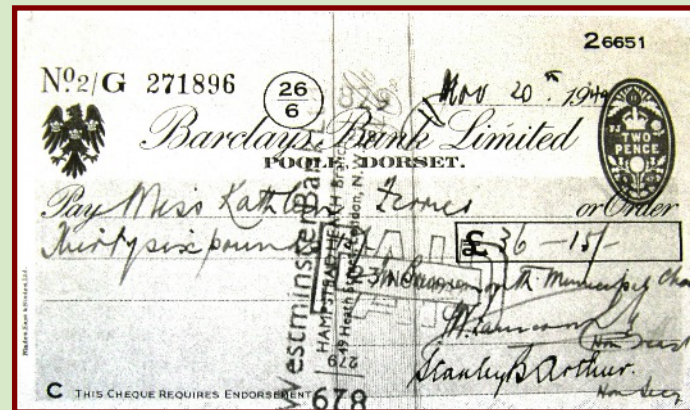
Her first performance was a solo singer in a light song recital at the Pavilion during 1943. Roy Henderson recruited her to sing with the Municipal Choir in *Messiah* during January 1944, and she returned in December of that year for two further performances.

Ferrier returned after the War for *The Apostles* and *Elijah* in 1946; *The Dream of Gerontius* in 1947; and Bach's *Schlage Doch* plus Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* in 1949 - all with the Municipal Choir.

Other appearances included three recitals for the fledgling Bournemouth Chamber Music Society in its 2nd, 3rd and 4th seasons - that in April 1947 was a joint recital with her teacher, Roy Henderson; the first Bournemouth performance of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra under Rudolf Schwarz in 1950, and a final *Dream* with a special combined National Federation of Music Societies' Choir. That was a special occasion as part of the Festival Of Britain in 1951.

The impact of her visits was recorded in a [Bournemouth] Winter Gardens Magazine of 1953 which ended with words from William Cory's *Heraclitus*:

Still are thy pleasant voices,
Thy nightingales, awake;
For death, he taketh all away,
But them he cannot take.



Cheque for £36 15/- for singing Brahms Alto Rhapsody and Bach's Cantata "Schlage Doch" in 1949

The Bournemouth Echo's critic reported:

Miss Ferrier's voice is as beautiful as ever. One is never conscious of strain or effort, and although the technique which produces such a clear line and pure tone can never be less than perfectly controlled, her singing has the wonderful quality of freedom that gives all her work its individual style. Ours is not a golden age of singers, but Miss Ferrier is the glorious exception.



Kathleen's last appearance in Bournemouth. She is pictured with tenor Richard Lewis to her right and conductor Alan J. Kirby to her left. The baritone soloist is Roy Henderson. The Choir was a composite one promoted by the N.F.M.S. Several members of Bournemouth's Municipal Choir were active at a national level with the N.F.M.S. The orchestra was the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra.

Sir Dan Godfrey

Dan Godfrey was born in 1868, the son of Dan Godfrey, the world-famous conductor of the Band of the Grenadier Guards. Dan, Junior was educated at King's College School, affiliated to the Royal College of Music, and was appointed conductor of the London Military band aged only 19. After spending two years in charge of an Opera troupe touring South Africa, Dan discovered his métier, at the age of 24, on the 22nd May 1893 in his first concert as the founder of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, the first Municipal Orchestra in the world. To be fair, at that time it was more band than orchestra and went by the name of "Dan Godfrey's Band". But, it was funded by Bournemouth's tax-payers and through energy, skill and stealth, Godfrey transformed his band into the world's first Municipal Symphony Orchestra. Dan Godfrey remained loyal to Bournemouth throughout his illustrious career until, he was put out to grass in 1934 after more than 41 years of dedicated service. *The Musical Times* recorded that ungrateful, bureaucratic event:

Sir Dan is giving up his work in Bournemouth, not because he is unwilling to continue with it, but because he has passed his sixty-fifth birthday, and is compelled by the rules of superannuation to retire.

Dan Godfrey's role in Bournemouth was defined in wide terms. Whilst conducting was at the heart of the matter, from 1896 he became General Manager of the Bournemouth's Winter Gardens, so he assumed the role of a Mr Fix-it



Dan Godfrey, FRAM, bandmaster and father to Sir Dan Godfrey. Father's first duty had been to provide a musical welcome as the Brigade of Guards marched into London after it had served in the Crimean War.

organising artistes, programmes and publicity for drama, revues, song recitals, lectures and much more besides. 1911 was a significant year for music in Bournemouth because Dan Godfrey added two strings to his Municipal bow. One was planned and the other fortuitous. The Bournemouth Municipal Band was designed to complement the orchestra to take music out of the Concert Hall to the masses relaxing in deck-chairs in the Pleasure Gardens and those walking the Pier. Other towns had found that putting a Military Band at the end of their piers, be the band good or bad, caused entrance turnstiles to click and clatter in a most welcome fashion. The Municipal Choir was an unplanned but welcome addition to Godfrey's Municipal portfolio.

Dan Godfrey became the acknowledged champion of British music. Godfrey's maxim was simple: local composers deserved a fair hearing. He was aided by

men such as John Camm. If Godfrey programmed a premiere of a British work, Camm would buy a full score, have it bound in beautifully in leather, and present it to the Bournemouth Music Library, the best local authority music library in the country. It had been created around the personal collection of 3060 bound and countless loose pieces which had been given to form the core of Bournemouth's John B.M. Camm Music Reference Library. Only in Bournemouth could scholars and enthusiasts hear and study the latest trends in our nation's music.

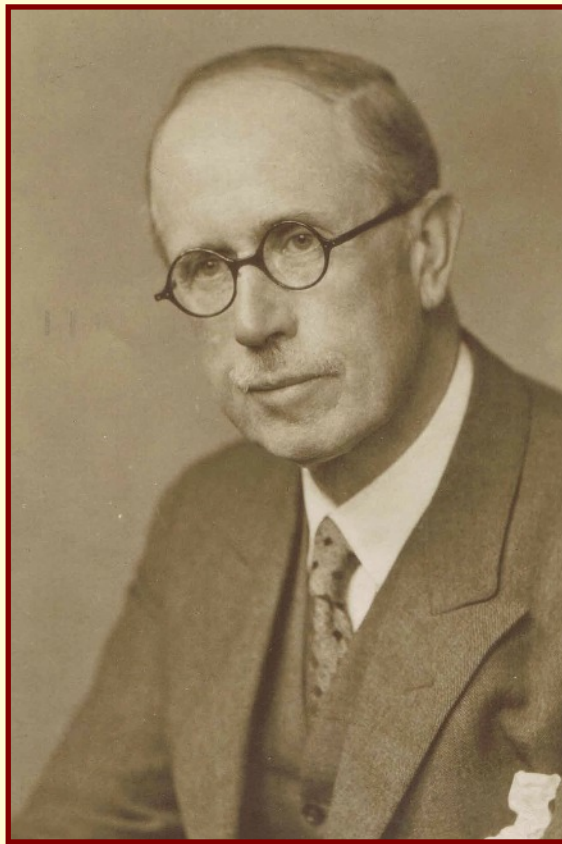
Dan Godfrey became the standard bearer and shop steward for Municipal music-making. He was invited to speak on its behalf at a Congress of the British Music Society in May 1920. He railed against cut-backs in local government support for music. It can't have been easy for Dan, the son of the most famous conductor of the Band of the Grenadier Guards, to accuse Army bands of competing unfairly with civilian musicians. His speech was occasioned by Hastings and Eastbourne disbanding their Summer bands and replacing them with cheaper Army groups.

After a quarter of a century in charge, Dan Godfrey felt confident enough of his position to ask Bournemouth Council for more resources, in 1920. He met with resistance and he responded by indicating that he might resign. Fortunately, for music on the south coast, a compromise was achieved but Dan recognised that overheads had to be reduced.

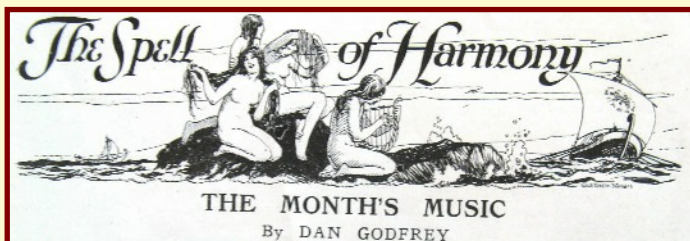
Despite the tight ship that Dan ran, the orchestra and bands cost £15, 000 each year, with a net cost to ratepayers of £450. Of course, Dan knew that hidden in those costs were expenses that related to the Municipal Choir - rehearsal and performance venue, box office costs, advertising and the costs of the orchestra both for the “dress rehearsal” and the performance were not recharged to the choir. Rather than cut, he suggested to the “**Municipal Choir**” that it should become an independent body with its own management. That was achieved, the Choir became “semi-detached” enjoying a generous subset of the privileges and hidden subsidies that it had always enjoyed. Perhaps, the Choir tacitly acknowledged that continued benevolence as it retained its former title and status as “The Municipal Choir”.

Dan Godfrey was an immensely efficient conductor rather than an inspiring one. He was a busy person and expected professional commitment whilst his military background lent a distinct tinge of the martinet to his character. To both the Municipal Orchestra and Choir, he was a Victorian father figure. Without Dan neither group would have possessed shape, form or life. Sometimes, the amateur Choir wanted *perhaps needed* a little more consideration, to have its voice heard not only through singing but as a partner in the music-making. Dan was wont to cut choruses after a poor rehearsal, and on one occasion not all of the singers in the performance knew where the cuts had been made. Words were exchanged but Dan calmed matters by admitting that he hadn't made his intentions clear.

Sir Dan Godfrey became a much-loved Bournemouth institution. A Northern commentator declared that Sir Dan had created a musical oasis in Saharan sands. And Sir Dan never stopped his



Sir Dan Godfrey pictured in 1933, at the end of his long service as Conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra and Choir



Dan had his own column in the local press

campaign to spread Bournemouth's example across the country. This is part of a letter he wrote to a Hull newspaper in 1926 :

... The first University Library in the British Isles is to be opened ... in London... This is an important lead which may be followed with benefit in Hull. ... It is high time the gramophone and pianola took their places beside the piano and the violin as instruments of pure music. They are invaluable to the study of music ... The education of the young man and woman of today cannot be considered to be complete without some knowledge of characterful masterpieces of our age as Holst's "Planets", Vaughan Williams' "London Symphony", Delius' "Dance Rhapsody" and, indeed, almost all of the recorded work of Sir Henry Wood, Gustav Holst, and other great British conductors.

Two thousand people packed into the Bournemouth Pavilion at the end of September 1934 to hear him conduct “his” Municipal Orchestra and “his” Military Band for the final time. Sadly, there was no room on stage for Godfrey's largest creation: the Municipal Choir. Sir Hugh Allen conveyed to Sir Dan

The warmest good wishes and sincere gratitude of many eminent composer, conductors, and performers, and of the great musical institutions who realised the debt they owed him.

Sir Daniel Evers Godfrey died in Bournemouth on Thursday, 20th July 1939, aged 71.

Charles Groves tackles the Big Beasts (1953-1968)

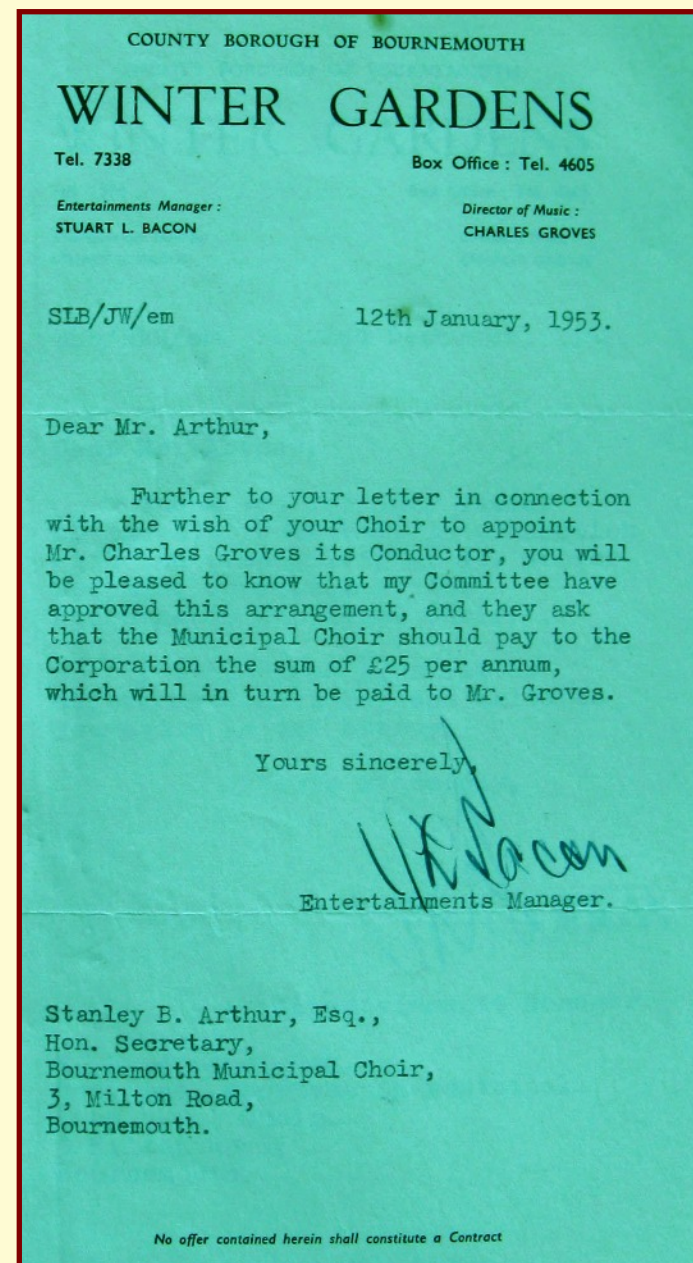


Charles Groves knew and conducted the Municipal Choir for forty years from his appointment in 1951 to direct the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra. Groves accepted the post of Conductor of the Municipal Choir when Roy Henderson retired in 1953. Groves himself had been immersed in choral music since joining St Paul's Cathedral choir in London at the age of eight. Lieder and accompanying were two of his studies at the Royal College of Music and his facility in sight-reading saw him chosen whilst still a student to accompany choral rehearsals of Brahms *German Requiem* and Beethoven's

Missa Solemnis for Maestro Arturo Toscanini. Gerald Larner entitled his obituary of Sir Charles *The benign baton* and went on to characterise another strength: *The bigger the work ... the better he did it*. Groves became the Choir's fluent, flexible friend: a self-effacing, pragmatic guide who wanted the best for them in terms of music and their best in performance. His beat was neither regimented nor over-analytical. His hands reached out to the Choir to lead them to groves of delight.

Roy Henderson and Rudolf Schwarz had prepared the first big beast: Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* with support from the 1951 Festival of Britain and stiffening from other choirs. Charles Groves saw it as his duty to move Beethoven's masterpiece from an occasional offering to the core of the Choir's repertoire.

Groves loved Beethoven and it was a natural progression to move in 1956 to the other twin peak: the *Missa Solemnis* which the Municipal Choir had not performed. Written at much the same time as the *Choral Symphony*, Beethoven's *Mass in D* places immense physical and technical demands on his Chorus. The work was prepared and produced in a similar fashion to the early performances of the *Choral Symphony* with help from the Choir's good companions in the Salisbury Musical Society. A second performance was given under George Guest in Salisbury Cathedral.



Handel's *Messiah* continued as the choir's staple diet, initially in the traditional exhausting manner of two performances in a day. As chronicled elsewhere, Groves worried about authenticity, but being practical and not revolutionary, he sought a middle path keeping the Choir large but refining the orchestra both through winnowing and reliance on continuo and a concertante group for solos and recitatives.

It was typical of Groves' love of the big canvas that his other foray into Handel revived his vivid oratorio *Israel in Egypt* in 1959. What an inspired choice for Choir and the Winter Gardens. The Choir's home had a panoramic stage that was the Concert Hall equivalent of the epic wide screens then in vogue in cinemas. Handel wrote many of his

choruses for double choir and the writer remembers the brilliant stereophonic effects in the chorus *He Spake The Word*: flies and lice appeared hither and thither, darting from part to part, only for Handel to gather all together into one grand chorus as locusts descended, covering and consuming all before them!

In contrast to the continuing reign of *Messiah*, the Choir's second favourite work, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* took a back seat under Groves. In the Municipal Choir's first forty years, it had been performed seventeen or eighteen times. However, in the next forty years in which Groves maintained contact with the Choir, it was produced only a handful of times and several of those were church performances using an organ as

accompaniment.

Charles Groves conducted it only once. Times had changed and the muscularity of Beethoven suited the mood better than of Mendelssohn's pastel piety. Groves realised that a massed Choir of almost 200 voices was unsuited to the nimble needs of most baroque repertoire. But the big pieces had to be scheduled and Bach's *Mass in B minor* was performed thrice under his direction and the *St Matthew Passion* twice.

What of the British lions? England's pride was Groves' delight. Elgar's pride of three lions: *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Kingdom* and *The Apostles* were at the heart of what mattered to Charles Groves.



Bournemouth Municipal Choir on stage in the Winter Gardens in 1959.
The lady in black is the accompanist Trissie Cox.

Sir Charles performed ***Gerontius*** with the Choir and Chorus five times. ***The Kingdom*** was done twice and ***The Apostles***, perhaps Elgar's most sophisticated score, was reserved for the Choir's 75th birthday. Benjamin Britten's ***War Requiem*** was held by Groves in high esteem and his Winter Gardens performance of 1966 was a moving occasion. The performance was repeated with other choirs from the region in Exeter, Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals. The scale of the operation allowed a particularly fine team of soloists to be hired: Heather Harper, Robert Tear and Thomas Hemsley, with the Melos Ensemble providing the chamber ensemble. Groves' strategy for prolonging the active life of the Bournemouth Orchestra after Town Hall cuts tore Municipal from its name included the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra becoming the resident orchestra for the Welsh National Opera Company. Charles Groves left Bournemouth to become conductor of the Opera Company in 1961, but he retained his role with the Choir. He then added ***Nabucco*** to Verdi's ***Requiem*** on the Municipal Choir's repertoire list, performing the opera twice during the 1960s in a concert version.

What about the shorter pieces, the mini-beasts: ***Belshazzar's Feast***, the ***German Requiem***, and Britten's ***Spring Symphony***, for example? Groves didn't believe in half measures. Whilst he was its chief conductor, the Choir was independent of the Bournemouth orchestra, not its servant or creature. The Choir was in charge of its concerts and would be seen singing throughout them. As in Noah's



Sir Charles returns to make a presentation to the accompanist, Rosemary Barnes.

Ark, the mini beasts came out two by two. ***Belshazzar's Feast*** came out alongside Herbert Howells' ***Hymnus Paradisi*** in 1955, shackled to Britten's ***Spring Symphony*** in 1959 and twinned with Brahms' ***German Requiem*** in 1962! Those programmes made terrific demands on the Choir, not only in performance but during their rehearsals with their talented Chorus Master, Cyril Knight. Stories suggest that the normally equable Charles became tetchy during the final orchestral rehearsal of the Britten-Walton programme. Perhaps one twinning went too far, Arthur Bliss' ***Morning Heroes*** had been

heard several times in Bournemouth under Roy Henderson, but star names such as Kathleen Ferrier singing contralto, with Michael Redgrave as narrator had not attracted a good house. Groves chose Ernest Bloch's ***Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh)*** as its companion. The concert's attendance was the poorest during the Choir's first hundred years of existence. Matters were not helped through unlucky scheduling: the performance took place on a very holy day in the Jewish religious calendar which exiled a natural part of the audience.

Charles' farewell as its principal conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir occurred after a fine fifteen-year reign at Easter 1968. Appropriately, his swan song was "***the Dream***" and the performance was regarded as outstanding, despite Charles having criss-crossed England during the preceding week. During the concert interval, the choir's chairman, Edwin Lediard Smith made a presentation to Charles and his wife Hilary. In performance the Choir responded well with the demons' chorus being "violent and menacing", and the mightiest moments in ***Praise to the Holiest*** had "splendour of sound".

Groves returned three times to conduct the Choir and later the Chorus, always in British music. Sir Charles Groves' final appearance with the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus was in June 1991 during one of the short-lived **Bournemouth International Festivals**, with another thrilling performance of ***Belshazzar's Feast***.

Roy Henderson Conductor 1942 - 1953



Roy Henderson started his career as a baritone and it was as one of the leading English singers of his time that he first appeared in concert with the Bournemouth Municipal Choir during

1924. Roy Henderson was a talented musician, quite capable of choir conducting and that is how he became conductor of the Municipal Choir in 1942 after spells with choirs in Huddersfield and Nottingham. His Nottingham Oriana Choir was the first amateur choir to sing in concert without copies. That was consistent with Roy's beliefs that words must not only be clear but that they must be communicated with sincerity: the audience must be drawn into and believe in the story.

Roy Henderson was generous and kindly. Like so many singers he turned to teaching as his voice started to lose its youthful bloom. One of his great discoveries was Kathleen Ferrier. His closeness to Kathleen Ferrier meant that she came to Bournemouth frequently, not only to sing with the Choir - most memorably in Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* (its first performance on the South Coast) - but also to give recitals.

Other Henderson pupils including Norma Procter, Rae Woodland, Jennifer Vyvyan and John Shirley Quirk made numerous appearances with the Municipal Choir in the 1960s and 1970s. Roy Henderson was the first conductor to use the new Winter Gardens in November 1947 when he conducted *Gerontius* with Kathleen Ferrier taking the part of *The Angel*.

Roy Henderson refreshed the Choir's repertoire and under his direction the Choir gave its first performances of five outstanding 20th century British music scores:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1946 | Elgar
<i>The Apostles</i> |
| 1948 | Vaughan Williams
<i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i> |
| 1949 | Bliss
<i>Morning Heroes</i> |
| 1951 | Walton
<i>Belshazzar's Feast</i> |
| 1952 | Delius
<i>Sea Drift</i> |

85, Belsize Gardens,
Hampstead, N.W. 3

May 19th, 1952

My dear choir,

At the end of our last concert I completed ten years as your conductor. They have been ten of the happiest years I have spent, making music with you and I feel my first vote of thanks is to you all for putting up with me for so long. When I look back, I feel that there has been a definite advance in the efficiency and musicianship of the choir as a whole. During that ten year period we have given Bournemouth several new works heard there for the first time. We have given a new conception of some of the old ones. We have introduced many new singers to the town, one of whom, Kathleen Ferrier, has risen to the heights of international fame, and others have attained to Festival standard in this country. This could not have been possible without the help of the committee and members of the choir who have loyally tried to do everything I have asked of them, and above all, to my two assistants Austin Dewdney and Cyril Knight for their patient training of the choir week after week.

Last season ran to its top form in Belshazzar's Feast. This was really a triumph for you all, including the orchestra, to which my very special thanks are due, and of course, and not least, Mr Knight. Next year we have a change in our last work, and I want a few more men to help our gallant tenors, if it is possible. Opera will give us the chance to develop expression both in feeling and in face. I want you to look like an operatic chorus and enter into the spirit of the thing. I expect a fair amount of fun out of this. I am glad we are performing Morning Heroes again. How easy it will be after the Walton. Sea Drift is my favourite short work, poignantly beautiful but not easy harmonically.

I wonder can anything be done to give us audiences worthy of our performances? Our prices are the lowest in England. Most choral societies have seats at 10/6d per concert. Poor societies with scratch orchestras, in more senses than one, charge 7/6d. We charge 5/-. Nowhere is music so cheap. Can we somehow all do something to persuade people to come to these concerts? Would a season ticket help? I feel the answer lies in action, and new action at that, otherwise we might just drift. Meanwhile, thank you all for your help last season to make the musical side of life a success, for the very hard work you put into it, and for keeping as much of an eye on the beat as you did at the concert.

My love to you all,

Roy Henderson



This is a rare picture of Roy Henderson with the Municipal Choir. Rare on two counts; the War had disrupted life and no image of the choir had been taken for ten years, and few copies are extant. This one belonged to Bournemouth organist Geoffrey Dufall who is amongst the men. After his death in the 21st century, it was passed to fellow organist, Rayner Skeet - but it had been torn in two! Digital techniques have been used to fuse it back together, but the flaw has not been eliminated - it's part of the picture's history! The occasion was March 1948 when Henderson was conducting a tough RVW double bill: the Sea Symphony and the cantata Dona Nobis Pacem. The couple to Roy's right are Cyril Knight (Chorus Master) and, we believe, the Choir's accompanist, Nora Bradbury. Nora Amy Bradbury was born on 2nd. February 1895 at Walsall, Staffordshire. She was the daughter of Harry Bradbury and Mary nee Harding. She became a piano tutor in Bournemouth and acted as deputy to Austin Dewdney, as accompanist to the Bournemouth Municipal Choir. Later, she succeeded him and served almost until Roy Henderson resigned. Sadly, Nora died young in Bournemouth on the 6th November 1952, aged 57 years.

Roy Henderson at the retirement party given to him by the Municipal Choir:

"I shall be keeping in touch with the Choir by proxy. Of the 10 soloists booked to sing next season, 5 are my pupils."

Roy Henderson loved life and enjoyed a very long retirement. When he died in March 2000, he was over 100 years old!

FAREWELL PARTY TO ROY HENDERSON

**All old members and patrons of the choir are invited to
the PAVILION BALLROOM on
Monday, March 16th. 7.45 - 11.45
GAMES and DANCING to
HAYDN POWELL AND HIS
PAVILION DANCE ORCHESTRA**

**Tickets (including refreshments),
5/6d from the Hon. Secretary.**

Dr. Henry Holloway D.Mus FRCO

Henry Holloway was appointed by Dan Godfrey to be the first Chorus Master of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir in 1911.

Henry Holloway was born in Worcester during 1871 and joined Worcester Cathedral as a treble chorister, later returning as its sub-organist and organ scholar from 1888 to 1892. Holloway gained his B. Mus from the University of Oxford in 1895. He prepared for his doctorate in Bournemouth and his exercise - a **Stabat Mater** for 8 part chorus and orchestra - was passed by Sir John Stainer and Sir Hubert Parry.

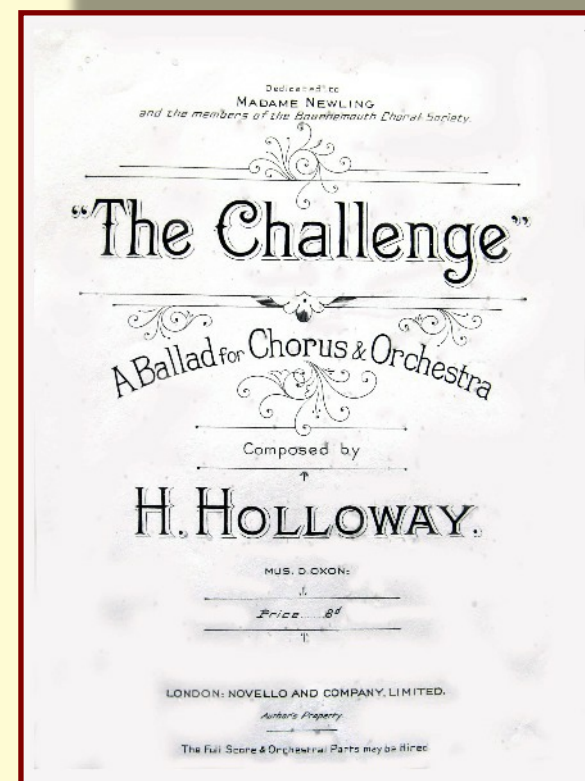
Although Henry Holloway was an all-round musician, he was accomplished on the piano and organ as well as being a fine singer. He wrote an effective **Piano Trio** which was performed in The Winter Gardens and also two symphonies which Dan Godfrey conducted. His heart was in church and choral music. He served as organist of St Stephen's Church in Bournemouth for thirty-eight years until his resignation in 1930, building its Choir into an effective, large ensemble that held him in the highest regard. Holloway's anthem **Abide With Me** remains in the repertoire of St Stephen's to this day. When "their" organist resigned, so did most of the Choir. He completed 56 years in church music with a four year stint at Christchurch Priory.



Dr Holloway lived with his wife Elsie in Queen's Park which was very convenient as Henry loved golf. Holloway was tall, broad-shouldered, clear of eye and he sported a substantial moustache. Henry Holloway possessed a friendly and genial disposition although he was somewhat retiring, so he was more suited to be a Chorus Master than a Director. Henry Holloway was given experience by Dan Godfrey who arranged for him to conduct the "**Festival Chorus**" supported by the Municipal Orchestra in a performance of **Messiah** at the end of the 19th century.

Thereafter, directing opportunities became fewer as Madame Newling and her choir took centre stage. Henry changed tack and wrote a Choral Ballad for Maude Newling's Choir, called **The Challenge**. A critic from *The Musical News* called it a "*clever work*" after it had been "*well performed*" by the choir and orchestra in March 1908. The critic noted that "*the composer was given a hearty reception*".

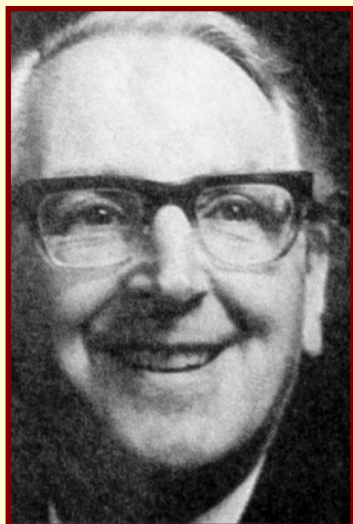
Dr Holloway died in 1948.



Geoffrey Hughes 1922 - 2007

Geoffrey Hughes became woven into the musical fabric of this area. For the members of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir and Bournemouth Symphony Chorus, he was a distinguished Chorus-Master for some eighteen years from 1969; for others he was an inspiring teacher, lecturer, promoter, founder of choirs and orchestras: in other words, he was a musician who made things happen. He is remembered by hundreds of people for instilling in them a love of music of all kinds. He had the rare ability to spot potential and talent in the most diffident of people, make them feel worthwhile and push them to fulfil their potential.

Geoff was involved in the musical life of the Welsh valleys from the age of five. His father was determined that his sons should not have to follow him down the mine and with war rapidly approaching Geoff went off to college to take an accelerated teaching course. But before he could begin his teaching career, Geoff joined the army at the end of the African campaign. And he



was lucky enough to be in Milan to see Toscanini conduct at the re-opening of **La Scala**.

After the war he returned to Wales to teach at Ebbw Vale Junior School. Soon, he moved to Poole, and joined the Bournemouth Municipal Choir as a bass. There he met a young alto called Hazel Bebbington. They celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 2005. Their daughter, Vanessa, plays in the BBC Symphony Orchestra and gave Geoff and Hazel two lively little grandsons.

Many singers on the South Coast remember Geoff as an inspiring choral conductor. He formed his own mixed-voice chamber choir, the **St. Giles Singers**, which was later to become the all-ladies **Rilstone Singers**.

In 1969 he took over from Cyril Knight as Chorus-Master of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir and was still there when it became the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus. Geoff never retired from music – he was still teaching virtually up to the end, until a heart attack told him time was nearly up. *Adapted from tributes to Geoff.*

POST CARD

from **Jean Harvey**
second soprano



Geoff was a perfectionist in all things and was always totally dedicated to whatever cause he espoused. This was so in the case of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and, although not a professional musician, his aim was to get the best out of a group of then up to 230 amateur singers. In all his 18 years as Chorus Master, he only ever missed two rehearsals - and that because of illness! It was Geoff who, with the three-man auditioning panel, accepted me into the BMC in 1974 at the beginning of over 31 joyful and memorable years as a second soprano.

LETTER CARD

from **Rosemary Allen**
second contralto



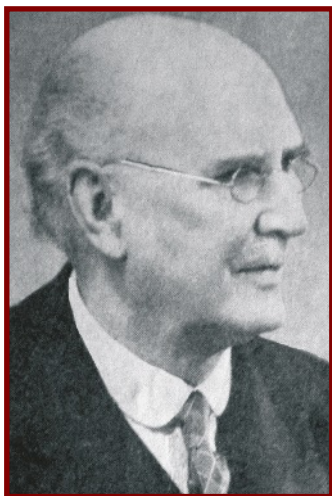
When Geoff moved to Poole College he was nominally in charge of Social Studies but he soon helped to form an orchestra and choir and organise Poole College Music Society plus three arts festivals, as well as being hugely influential in persuading doubters that the building of Poole Arts Centre, now the Lighthouse, was a good idea.

As if all this wasn't enough, he also gave piano and singing lessons up to Diploma standard at his home in Parkstone. At St Peter's Church, just round the corner, he gave his pupils and other young people the invaluable experience of singing or playing at the lunch time recitals he inaugurated.

But perhaps Geoff will be remembered best by the dozens, (or more probably hundreds) of young people, many of them now well into middle age, whom he inspired by his enthusiasm for music of all kinds. Long after he had officially retired, he was delighted when former pupils stopped him in the street and said, 'You won't remember me, but ...' And Geoff always did remember them. He was a great 'enabler', to use a fashionable word.

I knew Geoff first when I was still in my teens and my musical life and that of many others, won't ever be the quite same again without him.

Frank Idle, FRAM



Frank Idle was the Choir's Conductor and Chorus Master from 1931 taking over the latter role from Hadley Watkins. Frank Idle is remembered for a record that he made at the Crystal Palace in June 1926 featuring the 2620 voices of the Non-Conformist Union Festival Choir in Eric

Thiman's anthem ***Sing Alleluia Forth in Duteous Praise***, written a year or two earlier. The rather dimly recorded 78 rpm allows us to study his style of conducting. Considering the enormous choral forces, the anthem starts at a lively pace, the tempo marking is ***Allegro con spirito***, but when the unison verse turns into four part harmony, the chording is poor. The ***molto rallentando*** before the final verse is exaggerated in typical early 20th century style and the ***meno mosso, rall. largamente*** and the ***final molto rit.*** instructions are observed in a fashion that 21st century musicians would judge to be "over the top".

Frank Idle studied music at the Royal Academy of Music where his fellow students included Granville Bantock, John McEwen and Henry Wood. Frank held the Academy's Principal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, in high

esteem and affection. Sir Alexander conducted the orchestra, and in rehearsal he was wont to hand his baton to the young Frank Idle without warning, expecting him to pick up whatever movement of a symphony or concerto was being played. Idle started his work conducting Choral Societies at the age of 18. After College, Frank Idle became a Church Organist and the founder of the Lewisham Choral Society which he conducted for twenty years. Conductor of the People's Palace Choral and Orchestral Societies from 1908 to 1930, he also took charge of the Free Church Festival at the Crystal Palace during the same period.

Frank Idle composed songs, for solo voice and for choir and some organ music. Idle was renowned for his knowledge of voice production and his mastery in choral music. Frank Idle retired prematurely to the South Coast after suffering a breakdown through working too hard. Living in Harbour Hill Crescent above Poole Harbour, Frank was ideally placed to enjoy his recreations of boating and fishing. He was befriended by Graham Peel, who was a composer of songs, a philanthropist who espoused many good causes including prison work, and who became Chairman of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir in the late 1920s. It was Peel who persuaded Frank to come out of retirement and to become Chorus Master of the Municipal Choir. By the time that increasing deafness and infirmity caused Frank Idle to relinquish the conducting of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir in 1938, he had been a professional conductor for over 55 years.

THE PAVILION
BOURNEMOUTH.
GENERAL MANAGER L. H. HARKER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29th, 1935
At 3 and 8.15 p.m.

TWO PERFORMANCES
BY THE
Municipal Choir and Orchestra
OF
THE MESSIAH
(HANDEL).

SOLOISTS :

GARDA HALL	-	-	-	Soprano
GLADYS RIPLEY	-	-	-	Contralto
FRANK TITTERTON	-	-	-	Tenor
KENNETH ELLIS	-	Bass-Baritone		

Conductor - FRANK IDLE, F.R.A.M.

ADMISSION - - - 3/6, 2/6, 1/6 and 1/- all bookable.
Box Office open from 10 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. Sundays from 11 a.m.
Suttons, Printers, Boscombe.



*Memorial tablet to Frank Idle in
Bournemouth North Cemetery*

Cyril Knight FRCO hon. ARCM hon. FLCM



Cyril Knight was born in Fulham in July 1908, the youngest of four children. Cyril's father was a very religious, strict Victorian Insurance agent, whereas his mother was gentle, humorous and loved music. Cyril's elder brothers became scholars but Cyril, who was the outstanding musician of the family, quickly became involved in church music.

After being a chorister in Southwark Cathedral, he joined the Royal College of Music at a very early age studying with George Thalben-Ball and Herbert Howells. His precocity earned him his fellowship of the Royal College of Music at the age of only 18. Soon, he was organist at his grandparents' church: St. Martin's in Dorking and there he became involved with Ralph Vaughan Williams and the Leith Festival. For six years, Cyril was organist at St Mary's in Primrose Hill before he succeeded Bournemouth's most eminent composer-organist, Percy Whitlock, as organist of St Stephen's Church in 1936. He remained a church organist at St Stephen's interrupted by service in the 2nd World War and a spell at St Peter's until just before his death in 1982. He married Rachel Carnegie and their daughter was born in Bournemouth during November 1941.

"Mr Knight is probably the one person who has done more than anyone else to make St Stephen's what it is today."
(Father John Corbett)

Cyril Knight was the music master teacher at Porchester (Boys) School for 17 years whilst his brother, Eric "Ego" Knight, a bass in Cyril's church choir and his Municipal Choir, taught Religious Studies and Classics at Bournemouth School. Being connected to a boys' school became a classic twentieth century technique for organists to cultivate potential choristers. However, whilst Cyril Knight built up one of the most outstanding church choirs in the South of England. Later, he had to admit girls and women, firstly by stealth (his wife Rachel and sister-in-law Kay would sing through the rear railings of the Chancel) but, eventually, ladies gained full membership and seats in the choir.

Knight became Chorus Master of the Municipal Choir in 1941, a post that he held until 1968,



although he was absent in the RAF from 1942 until the Second World War ended in 1945. Cyril Knight insisted on clear diction and his strength was in rehearsal: an excellent quality for a Chorus Master.

His teaching career and his all-male church choir made Cyril an excellent tutor for the tenors and basses of the Municipal Choir. Cyril Knight's work with the choir was sustained over a quarter of a century, far longer than any other Chorus Master. Cyril Knight was not a prolific composer but the hymn tune "**Meyrick Park**" ensures that Bournemouth has a niche in the New English Hymnal. For many years, Cyril conducted the annual Bournemouth Schools' Carol Festival in the Winter Gardens. For a short while, he was conductor to the Bournemouth Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

Anne Lloyd tells of Cyril's faith, courage and humour in the face of adversity. At the start of the 1980s, he contracted cancer but he continued to play at St Stephen's whenever he could. His final service was just a few weeks before his death and at its end, the congregation clapped in salute, both to his bravery and almost 50 years of brilliant musical service. St Stephen's church marked Cyril Knight's centenary in July 2008 with a concert containing choruses from **Messiah**, **Elijah** and other sacred pieces.

Cyril Knight's life was centred around his two passions: his Christian belief and the joy of bringing music alive. Nothing pleased him more than helping a choir to produce a fine performance of a musical masterpiece.

Graham Peel, M.A.

The Pavilion Years coincided with the chairmanship of Graham Peel, son of a cotton-spinning magnate, distant relation of the nineteenth century Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel and composer of 100 published songs. He had moved to Bournemouth around the outbreak of World War I and lived in Marden Ash on Bath Road. Geoffrey Miller records Peel's impact on the Municipal Choir in his book "Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra":

"The choir had flourished during the thirties under the chairmanship of Graham Peel, the composer of the best loved of all settings on Housman's *In Summer Time on Bredon*

A *Bournemouth Echo* obituary records that Graham Peel's sister, Mrs Percy [Katharine] Dixon, was associated with him in many of his social and philanthropic interests. She had sung in the Municipal Choir since the early 1920s. Later she was President or Life President of the Bournemouth Municipal Choir until she died at the age of 100 in November 1973!

The life-style of the British middle classes in the early 20th century depended on the willingness of others to give them dutiful support. Chambermaids, cooks, grooms, chauffeurs, gentlemen's gentlemen, etc freed their masters and mistresses to do

as they pleased. In Graham Peel's case there was a virtuous circle of service and duty for he gave freely of his time, money and wisdom to support the needy. It is a truism that the helper helps himself as much as those he reaches out to help. So, it is important to examine the wellsprings from which Peel drew his endless waters of



compassion. To be involved with the Bournemouth Municipal Choir or Orchestra is natural for a musician, singer and composer, particularly one who has money, a philanthropic nature, a wide network of contacts and a known ability for organisation. The benefits are symbiotic and mutual.

Graham Peel had been a driving force behind the birth of the Bournemouth Musical

Competitive Festival that was founded in 1927 and still continues in the 21st century. No individual or firm subscribed more than Graham Peel's £50 to get this institution off the ground and Graham ensured that his sister, Mrs Percy Dixon, put up a further ten guineas. Graham Peel became Vice President, a member of the Festival's general committee and indulged his speciality, song, on the Vocal Class Sub-Committee. His presence ensured that his own song *Gypsies* was a set piece for mezzo sopranos one year and that another song *Nick Spence* was the compulsory song for boys under 12 years old in the following year. Doubtless, it was Graham who attracted an old Harry Plunkett Green (1868–1935, the famous tenor and Hubert Parry's son-in-law) to act as an adjudicator for three successive years.

Peel faced an issue on becoming chairman of the Choir: his lack of rapport with Hadley Watkins, the choir's chorus master. After a couple of years of uneasy truce, Peel spotted an opportunity to stage a coup. Frank Idle had retired prematurely to the South Coast after he had suffered a breakdown through working too hard. He was befriended by Graham Peel who suggested to Frank that he would make the perfect candidate for the post of Conductor of the Municipal Choir. With Dan Godfrey soon to retire, any Chorus master would be able to combine such duties with conducting the public performances. At that time, the role of Chorus Master was neither in the gift of the choir's Chairman nor

of its committee; the choice was vested in the members. Gerrymandering a special meeting of members left a split decision - a substantial minority of singers supported their existing Chorus Master, Hadley Watkins. The issue nearly went to a contest and vote between Hadley Watkins and Frank Idle at an AGM, and only Hadley's reluctant withdrawal after a difficult exchange of letters with Graham Peel avoided such division. Frank Idle became the Choir's Chorus Master in 1932.

As usual in such matters, a form of words covered the ugly truth in a press release:

Mr Hadley Watkins, who, for a number of years, has rendered most valuable service to the Bournemouth Municipal Choir as Chorus Master, recently resigned that position. To mark the great appreciation of the work he has done and their regret at severance of this connection, the Choir presented Mr Watkins with a cheque.

Graham Peel faced other difficulties whilst at the helm of the Choir. Its economy had rested on selling tickets not only for two concerts but also cheaper tickets for entry to the dress rehearsal. The Winter Gardens had never charged the Choir for using its Hall for final rehearsal, but The Pavilion's management demanded 120 guineas (£126) for the Concert day and a further 120 guineas to hold a dress rehearsal on another day. Greater cost for a venue that was smart but with a smaller seating capacity for the audience and a stage that was so small that the Choir was packed like sardines in a can whilst their conductor couldn't see them so his

Memorial Concert
of
Songs by Graham Peel

APRIL 19th, 1938.



The simple plaque in Holdenhurst cemetery concludes

A MAN GREATLY BELOVED

restraining wave was ignored as they drowned the orchestra.

Graham Peel knew councillors, and he was admired and respected by them because of his work: nationally for discharged prisoners and locally for his commitment of time and money to the Bournemouth Council for Social Service. His was a voice that could not be ignored. Perhaps, nobody but Chairman Peel could have ensured that The Pavilion, the pride of the municipality, would be reconfigured within five years of being opened to accommodate the wishes of an amateur choir. The Choir benefited greatly from Graham Peel's advocacy and from his benevolence. It showed him respect: in the Choir's minutes, he's always referred to as Mr. G. Peel, M.A.

Graham Peel died at home on Saturday afternoon, the 16th October 1937. He was 59 years old and 40 years on from Harrow School and its songs that had helped to define his life and composition. In death, he was esteemed more for his public works than for his published works. The great and the good of Bournemouth attended his funeral: an acknowledgement of his service to the community. The Service became a grand affair that needed the ample space of Peel's local Parish Church of St Peter's rather than the village church in Holdenhurst on the edge of town where the Peel family worshipped. 45 members of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra with Richard Austin played the slow movement from Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* and an orchestral arrangement, probably by Henry J. Wood, of Chopin's *Funeral March*.

Constantin Silvestri Conducts



LETTERCARD

from **Brian Johnston**
former violinist with
the **Bournemouth**
Orchestras



Constantin Silvestri, the Romanian maestro of the BSO from late 1961, had always wanted to conduct the 'Dream of Gerontius', probably after hearing a famous broadcast in 1945 of Sargent conducting with Heddle Nash as the tenor soloist. He was unable to obtain the parts in Romania in 1947.

Much later he was scheduled to do it with the BSO and Municipal Choir, and he started to rehearse it with us in his usual very penetrating style, drawing all sorts of subtleties, phrasing and nuances from the score. We were surprised when he announced that he had asked Charles Groves to conduct the concert instead of himself. I think he identified himself with the work and it all became emotionally too much for him. He had a high regard for Groves and attended the concert. At the end he remained in his Winter Gardens seat deeply moved and in tears, and was almost the last to leave the building.

The Choir was very receptive to Silvestri's musical ideas, and there were great interpretations of the Dvorak 'Stabat Mater' and the Mozart 'Coronation Mass' under his baton. In 1969 on Silvestri's sad demise, I auditioned for the Bournemouth Sinfonietta and enjoyed 30 wonderful years with them.

LETTERCARD

from **Donald Sheppard**
second tenor



Our first contact with Silvestri was to sing at his first concert as Principal Conductor. The programme included the final section of Ravel's 'Daphnis et Chloe' ballet music which involved a wordless chorus. Silvestri came to a piano rehearsal and, after being introduced to the chorus, looked to our accompanist, Trissie Cox, who played the written cue. Silvestri stopped and said "Again!". He stopped again, looked at us and said "This is Daphnis?" We nodded and he went over to the piano, peered at the score, turned to us and said "This is second flute! You will not hear!" In the orchestral rehearsal we duly missed our entry. He stopped, looked up at us, moved his arms around and said "You swim!"

The piece was repeated in 1965 at a special event attended by the Mayor and other dignitaries. It was recorded for subsequent transmission on the opening night of BBC 2 in the South. At the end of it Humphrey Burton told the audience that, due to a fault in the tape, it could not be shown. The BSO and Choir came to the Winter Gardens the next morning and the televised version was without audience.

In November 1967 we took part in a concert which started with Britten's 'The Building of the House' and was preceded by the Britten arrangement of the National Anthem. Silvestri's comment after the anthem in rehearsal was "God save the tune".

From a review published in the Bournemouth Evening Echo of Silvestri's first concert as Principal Conductor of the BSO in October 1961:

*And so on to the **Daphnis and Chloe** of Ravel. What a moving finale to this great concert. The rich evocative, sensuous sound that only Ravel can win from an orchestra proved Silvestri's rapport with the idiom of widely diverse modern masters. The semi-chorus of the Municipal Choir contributed to the success of these gorgeous pearls of musical expression. Everyone on the platform excelled in a performance of intensity and eutony.*

Thomas Hadley Watkins



Hadley Watkins was a self-taught Welsh musician who came to Bournemouth in 1906 with a high reputation for conducting Welsh Choirs, and for adjudicating choral music at competitive Festivals, including the Welsh National Eisteddfod. Hadley Watkins encouraged Dan Godfrey to programme Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony on the town's pier as he felt that its Peasants' Dance, Storm & Thanksgiving Hymn fitted in with the 'surge of the sea' which was 'nature's music in diapason song'. Hadley Watkins was active in helping Dan Godfrey to log the progress of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, one was referred to him as Dan's

*The Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra:
Twenty One Years of Municipal Music 1893-1914.*



The frontispiece of the Choir's earliest and most vocal supporters

Boswell, and he published a book to celebrate the orchestra's coming of age in 1914: Hadley Watkins, organist of Lansdowne Baptist Church, was Dan Godfrey's personal choice to succeed Mr W Woodward as the Municipal Choir's Chorus Master in 1923.

What can we make of the sudden, acrimonious departure of Hadley Watkins as the choir's Chorus Master following the arrival of Frank Idle as its Conductor in 1931? Did Frank demand complete control from first rehearsal to final performance? (That is what happened and the role of Chorus Master was in abeyance through the 1930s).

Had Hadley Watkins and the new chairman, Graham Peel fallen out? (They stood shoulder to shoulder in 1929 arguing the case for the the Choir when it was threatened with being shut out or priced out of the new Municipal venue, the Pavilion Theatre.) Possibly, Hadley Watkins' vainglorious publication of a private congratulatory letter written to him by Sir Malcom Sargent after the Choir's successful performance of *Messiah* at the 1930 National Union of Teachers Conference had ruffled feelings.

We don't know the answer but there was no attempt by the choir's ordinary members, or their representatives on the committee to retain the services of this man who had been part of, and who had celebrated, so much of music making in Bournemouth since the creation of its Municipal Orchestra.

Hadley Watkins moved to Iford Congregational Church as organist after the building of that church. He was the inaugural Secretary of the Bournemouth Musical Festival, a post he retained until his death, and his great organisational abilities ensured that the Bournemouth event became one of the leading competitive festivals in the country. Hadley Watkins composed a great deal of music, mostly for choirs including 4 Troubadour Songs and a Madrigal "*Tell Me, Flora*".

Outside of music, Hadley Watkins' day job was as Secretary to the Y.M.C.A. Branch in Bournemouth, an organisation that he served in France during the Great War and afterwards in Australia. Hadley Watkins died in hospital in London at the end 1935.

Mr Hadley Watkins was 73 when he died. He left a widow and a married daughter.

