



perspectives

CHELTENHAM ARTS CULTURE

Cheltenham Arts Council: awards_funding_publicity_events listings

February - May 2022

*Cheltenham's arts scene reawakens
Reopening the Wilson • Choirs and orchestras
Poetry and Writing*

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Submissions must be with us by the following dates for consideration for the next issue:

End of November deadline for Feb/May Issue

End of March deadline for June/Sept Issue

End of July deadline for Oct/Jan Issue

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PERSPECTIVES TEAM

EDITOR RACHEL TEDD DESIGN CHANTAL FREEMAN
LISTINGS ALICE HODSDON ART CONSULTANT NIKI WHITFIELD

Dear Readers

Welcome to the Spring 2022 issue of Perspectives! There's a distinctly celebratory feeling about the articles in this edition, many of which describe events that could not have gone ahead a year ago. Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra, Cheltenham Bach Choir and Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra fall into this category, as does The Arts Society Cheltenham, who were at last able to put on a magnificent day of art, craft and music for a local school. I bet there are many adults who wish they could have reverted to childhood for a day to experience something similar!

Other organisations such as the Cheltenham Poetry Society and the Gloucestershire Writers' Network, have adapted and carried on with their creative endeavours throughout the pandemic (not without challenges, I should add) and have produced some wonderful written works of art as a result - their articles are featured in this issue.

Cheltenham's rich heritage also comes into focus with an article from Pittville Pump Room Revival about the return of an important feature to the Pump Room, and one from Friends of The Wilson about plans to re-open the museum and art gallery later this year.

If you happened to be on The Promenade on 11th September last year, you may have encountered Cheltenham Arts Council's "Stalls on the Prom" event, at which 25 voluntary arts

organisations promoted their activities. It was a great success - do read the articles from CAC and the Cheltenham Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society and browse through the photos of the event.

CAC is sad to report the closure of one of our member organisations, the Blue Moon Harmony Choir. We hope that all the singers manage to find another outlet for their musical talent. Our thanks also go to the Suffolk Anthology bookshop, which has now closed due to retirement. The shop was a winner of CAC's Charles Irving Sponsorship Award, which recognises a local business that has provided exceptional support for the voluntary arts.

Talking of awards, at time of writing we are planning to hold this year's Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 9th March at 5pm at the Cheltenham Playhouse. We hope to see you there!

Rachel Tedd

PERSPECTIVES EDITOR
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'BLUE SKY' BY SARAH GODDARD - EXHIBITING AT THE GARDENS GALLERY IN FEBRUARY

*Perspectives is produced three times a year.
The next issue will span June - September 2022.*

SUBMISSION (ADS AND EVENTS) MUST BE WITH US BY THE END OF MARCH FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEXT ISSUE. PLEASE EMAIL EVENT DETAILS TO PERSPECTIVES.LISTINGS@GMAIL.COM

REOPENING THE WILSON

AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF FRIENDS OF THE WILSON

Good news at last: a date – late April (Covid permitting) – has been confirmed by the Cheltenham Trust for the reopening of The Wilson, the town's Art Gallery and Museum.



THE WILSON FRONTAGE BY ADRIAN BARLOW

The Wilson is one of the venues the Trust manages on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), along with Leisure @ Cheltenham, the Pittville Pump Room, the Prince of Wales Stadium and the Town Hall. Through its stewardship of this diverse portfolio the Trust aims to fulfil its mission (as set out on its website) 'to contribute to a vibrant cultural economy'.

The Trust's planning application for the Wilson's refurbishment was submitted to CBC's Planning Committee in November 2021 and the Committee's decision was due to be announced in mid-January. In a letter accompanying the application, the Trust

stressed that the internal changes proposed at ground and first-floor levels would only be small-scale:

The minor internal changes proposed at ground floor level will allow for the extension to the café and provide a flexible space for artists/visitors. Minor internal changes at first floor level include improvements to the existing gallery space and internal layout changes at third floor level will accommodate proposed artist studios.

But these small-scale changes have big ambitions. The key element is the change of focus for the ground floor concourse, which has its main entrance from Clarence Street and the rear entrance from Chester Walk. The large reception desk, which used to be both the first point of contact for visitors to The Wilson and the location of the town's Tourist Information Centre, will now become the serving point for newly enlarged Arts Café

occupying most of the ground floor. Tourist Information services, now under the control of Visit Cheltenham, will only be offered online. The old café area will now be a flexible annexe to the new café area, while the former Guild at 51 shop will become a lounge space available for individual work or study and for small meetings.

The configuration of the café's furniture will be flexible too, allowing for performance areas of different sizes and for the Reception Desk to be located at different points on the ground floor, depending on the overall layout. The Trust's aim is to make The Wilson a much

more welcoming place for both first-time and regular visitors. If it can succeed in this, then the café itself should provide, it's hoped, a strong source of income, helping to make the town's Art Gallery and Museum much more sustainable economically than hitherto.

This emphasis on café culture is designed to link directly with the other two significant proposals. The former mezzanine floor will now be closed off from the café and converted into a Community Arts gallery, funded by a grant from the Sir Charles Irving Trust and intended to provide a fully equipped exhibition space for local artists and art societies. On the third floor the office area, housing (before the pandemic) staff of the Cheltenham Trust, will now be converted into studio spaces that can be hired by local artists and 'creatives' – people involved in a wider range of creative work than traditionally encompassed by the term 'artist'.

The Trust's ambitions for The Wilson thus envisage that the ground-floor café with its performance space, the community arts gallery on the former mezzanine, and the artists' studios at the top of the building will together generate a new excitement running through a building that was formerly seen as lacking in visitor appeal and in footfall. 'Feeding creativity' – the strapline of the old café – will apply even more aptly to the new.

But art galleries and museums are nothing without their collections. And we now need to hear more, much more, from the Cheltenham Trust about its plans for giving The Wilson's remarkable collections new life. A few years from now it will be by this, and not only by its coffee and croissants, that The Wilson's contribution to the cultural economy of Cheltenham and to the Arts in Britain will be judged.

Adrian Barlow

<http://www.friendsofthewilson.org.uk>

James Hodsdon

Cheltenham Arts Council was very sad to hear of the recent death of James Hodsdon. James was a member of a number of CAC's member organisations, including Friends of The Wilson, Cheltenham Civic Society, Gloucestershire County History Trust, Cheltenham Local History Society and the Friends of Pittville. He was also an author, and recently contributed two excellent articles to Perspectives. He was awarded CAC's Joyner Cup in 2012. James made a significant contribution to the heritage and culture of Cheltenham as a whole and will be much missed. CAC sends its sincere condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

CHELTENHAM CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

REVIEW OF THEIR STUNNING FIRST POST-COVID CONCERT

The Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra, under one of its favourite guest conductors, Warwick Cole, made a welcome return to live performances on Saturday 18th September in St Andrew's church, helped by a grant from Cheltenham Arts Council.

The programme consisted of baroque works by well-known composers including Vivaldi, Corelli and Boccherini plus a work by the lesser-known Baldassare Galuppi. The works did not require any woodwind or brass players but it was a pleasure to see some of the Orchestra's regular wind players in the audience.

Kelly McCusker, a seasoned performer of baroque music, was Guest Leader of the Orchestra and Warwick Cole conducted

from the harpsichord. Although the players had not been together for over a year their performance was first class. The star of the evening was Hannah Brooks-Hughes who gave a vivid and technically brilliant account of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. For one so young (17 according to the programme notes) she astonished the audience with her virtuosity, giving an impression of total mastery of the music without being at all "showy" in her performance. Gloucestershire is indeed fortunate to have such a musical star developing here. The Orchestra clearly loved playing with Hannah and Stephen Pett provided an excellent cello continuo.

The audience contained a new generation of concert goers who clearly enjoyed the event.



HANNAH IN REHEARSAL WITH
CHELTENHAM CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

FOR DETAILS OF UPCOMING CCO CONCERTS, SEE

[HTTP://CCO.FREECLUSTER.EU](http://cco.freecluster.eu)

 CHELTENHAMCHAMBERORCHESTRA

A NEW BOOK OF POEMS

INSPIRED BY MUSIC

Sharon Larkin reports on a new anthology spearheaded by Cheltenham Poetry Society

In early December, a group of local poets made plans to gather in front of Pittville Pump Room to mark the publication of an anthology of poems on musical themes. The book, *Inspired by Music*, features fifty-seven poems by seventeen poets, with photographs carefully chosen to accompany the words.

for the disappointment of having to defer the CPS Awayday writing retreat for the third time because of the pandemic. The call quickly went out to the poets who had originally signed up for the retreat, as well as stalwarts of Poetry Cafe Refreshed, which had to stop meeting in February 2020. Poets supporting the local 'Stanza' (affiliated to The Poetry Society in London) were also invited to contribute to the book. The idea of submitting poems for the anthology had instant appeal, uniting poets



LEFT TO RIGHT: GILLY RIDLEY-WELLS, JUDITH VAN DIJKHUIZEN, MICHAEL NEWMAN, IRIS ANNE LEWIS, CHRIS HEMINGWAY, SHARON LARKIN, SHEILA SPENCE, ANNIE ELLIS, ROGER TURNER, KATHRYN ALDERMAN.

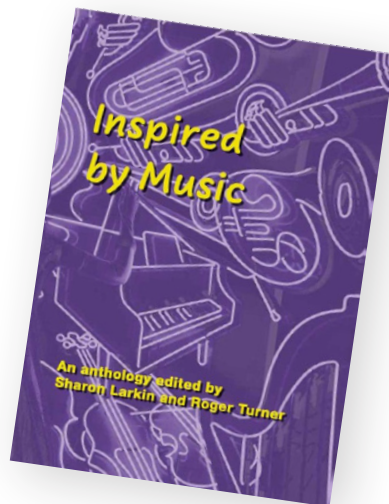
Back in August, the poet Michael Newman and I discussed the idea of a new anthology, and CPS Chairman Roger Turner welcomed the idea, readily agreeing to support the project and to co-edit the book. We all agreed that it would be an opportunity to bring poets together, virtually at least, compensating – a little –

around a shared venture while waiting for regular meetings to start up again.

Most poets are music-lovers, and the affinity between music and poetry is well recognised, reaching back to the oral tradition, with words memorised and recited down the generations, developing

into chants and songs. With such a heritage, and the contemporary blending of 'spoken word' and song, an anthology celebrating words and music seemed to us to be well overdue. The poems selected for inclusion span the genres, from opera, orchestral, sacred music, film music, folk, rock and pop. The poets share their experiences of concerts and gigs, listening to music on the move through headphones or in the car, or enjoying music at home – on radio, vinyl, CD or Spotify. Many of the poems relate to memories of people and places, others reveal emotions aroused by music, or moods and atmospheres created by specific songs or pieces. Other poems draw on 'music memories' from childhood, when learning to play, sing or dance ... and a surprising number of birds feature in the poems.

Inspired by Music can be purchased from <https://eithonbridge.com/anthologies> along with previous CPS anthologies, including Cheltenham 300 (2016) and Poetry from Gloucestershire (2020).



CHELTENHAM ARTS COUNCIL AWARDS CEREMONY

Wednesday 9th March 2022, 5pm – 6.30pm
Cheltenham Playhouse, Bath Road, GL53 7HG

Come and celebrate with our award winners!

CHELTENHAM BACH CHOIR SINGS AGAIN!

AN UPDATE FROM SUE SILCOCK

After all the difficulties and changes of plan of the last eighteen months, it was good to be able to start planning a concert for the 2021 Autumn term.

The choir had been rehearsing in various formats during the lockdown. Zoom rehearsals were felt to be sufficiently adequate to keep the voice exercised, but were not over-enthralling. In the summer of 2021, we graduated to singing (almost in the open air) in the Riding for the Disabled barn at the Racecourse. It was then that the choir realized anew that singing together was a very enjoyable activity and one that they did not want to lose.

The logistics of organising a concert were daunting but our concert manager, Alan Hazell, overcame many difficulties, and the choir found themselves on the stage at the Town Hall with the Musical and Amicable Orchestra, suitably spaced for a delightful Mozart concert on October 23rd. The programme started with Ave Verum Corpus, rendered with feeling according to one member of the audience, progressed on to the Jupiter Symphony, ably performed by the orchestra, and concluded with the Grand Mass in C Minor.

Serious rehearsals were started in September in St Luke's Church. There was the space for social distancing and attention to ventilation was enhanced by leaving all the doors open. The numbers of singers may not have been as large as before lockdown but everyone worked hard and voices slowly started to warm up.

The choir were very grateful for the support of the Cheltenham Arts Council who sponsored one of the soprano soloists in the Grand Mass, and we were very appreciative of the enthusiastic audience who ventured out to hear the choir. We can

now look forward to performing the St Matthew Passion in Tewkesbury Abbey on April 2nd 2022 with confidence.



IN REHEARSAL



THE PERFORMANCE

For more details about the choir and their future programme please see the choir website: www.cheltbachchoir.com

LISTINGS: EVENTS DIRECTORY JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2021

VISUAL ARTS

Cheltenham Camera Club Annual Exhibition & Gloucestershire Young Photographer 2022, Wed 4- Mon 16 May, 10am-4pm, Chapel Arts, celebrating the work of members, from beginner to advanced, alongside images taken by pupils from primary and secondary schools across the county. cheltenhamcameraclub.uk

AT THE GARDENS GALLERY, MONTPELLIER GARDENS:

Opening times vary

Sarah Goddard, Wed 2- Tue 8 Feb,

Martin Fry: Cotswold and Cornish Cream, Wed 9- Tue 15 Feb, a celebration of Gloucestershire and Cornwall

Alison Woodhead: Land Art, Wed 16- Tue 22 Feb, **Tony Davie: Haunting Paradise**, Wed 23 Feb- Tue 1 Mar,

Claudia Araceli, Wed 2- Tue 8 Mar,

Sophie Beckett: CT Scan Art, Wed 9- Tue 15 Mar, **Rosemary Frith**, Wed 16- Tue 22 Mar,

Cheltenham Art Club

Spring Exhibition, Wed 23- Tue 29 Mar, **Nikki Seville: Eden**, Wed 30 Mar- Tue 5 Apr, **Wendy McKenzie: Exploring the Landscape**, Wed 6- Tue 12 Apr, **Angie Spencer**, Wed 13- Tue 19 Apr, **Jazz Festival Exhibition**, Wed 27 Apr- Tue 3 May, **Barbara Skingle: A Show for Ghosts**, Wed 11- Tue 17 May, **Antonella Scarpa-Isles: Landscape Paintings**, Wed 18- Tue 24 May, **Luba Arnold: Light and Space**, Wed 25- Tue 31 May



CLAUDIA ARACELI, 'STILL WATERS'

MUSIC

Cheltenham Music Society Contemporary Concert: The Hermes Experiment, Sat 5 Feb, 3.30pm, Bethesda Methodist Church, music from Barbara Strozzi and Clara Schumann to a range of contemporary composers including Nicola LeFanu, Laura Moody, Jeremy Thurlow and Philip Venables, cheltnmusicsoc.co.uk

Cheltenham Music Society: Jerusalem Quartet, Thu 17 Feb, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, Mozart: String Quartet in C maj K465 'Dissonance', Bartók: String Quartet No. 5 in C min op.110, Tchaikovsky: String Quartet No.1 in D maj op.11, cheltnmusicsoc.co.uk

Holst Victorian House: A Recital of English Song, Fri 25 Feb, 7pm- 8.30pm, Chapel Arts, GL52 3QQ, inc. Holst's Vedic Hymns, Peter Martin (tenor) and Matthew Jorysz (piano), see holstvictorianhouse.org.uk/events/a-recital-of-english-song/

Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra, Sat 5 Mar, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, Wind Concert, with music by Mozart, Gordon Jacob and Raff, Cond. Tom Gauterin

Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: Celebrating Beethoven! Sat 12 Mar, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, Overture, op. 62: Coriolan, Violin Concerto in D maj, op. 61, Violin Soloist: Michael Foyle, Symph No. 3 in Eb maj, op.55: Eroica

Cheltenham Choral Society: Bach's St John Passion, Mon 28 Mar, 7.30pm, Town Hall, in collaboration with English Touring Opera, cheltnchoral.org.uk



DEBS HARRISON

Cheltenham Music Society: Sean Shibe (guitar), Thu 31 Mar, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, a typically eclectic kaleidoscope of works and styles spanning the centuries from Renaissance John Dowland to contemporary Magnus Lindberg, cheltnmusicsoc.co.uk

Cheltenham Music Society Contemporary Concert: Amy Roberts (oboe), Gamal Khamis (piano), Sat 2 Apr, 3.30pm, Bethesda Methodist Church, Greek and Roman myths inspire an eclectic programme of works linked by dreams and night time, inc. works by Britten, Messiaen, Richard Rodney Bennett, John Woolrich and Amy Bryce, cheltnmusicsoc.co.uk

Cheltenham Bach Choir: **B minor Mass**, Sat 2 Apr, 7.30pm, Tewkesbury Abbey, cheltbachchoir.com

Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra, Sat 2 Apr, 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, Bartók: Romanian Folk Dances, Sibelius: Pelléas and Mélisande, Vaughan Williams: Symph No. 5 (postponed from Jan)

Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra, Sun 3 Apr, 3pm, Pittville Pump Room, Holst: The Perfect Fool, Gipps: Horn Concerto, with Robert Fox - French Horn, Elgar: Symph No. 1

Cheltenham Music Society: Leon McCawley (piano), Thu 28 Apr, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, Haydn: Variations in F minor H.XVII:6, Mozart: Sonata in F maj K533/494, Schubert: Sonata in B flat maj D960, cheltmusicsoc.co.uk

Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: Classical music from films, a family afternoon, Sun 8 May, 3pm, Pittville Pump Room, inc. Mozart: Romanze from Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (Ace Ventura: Pet Detective and Batman), J. Strauss II: Blue Danube Waltz (Titanic, A Space Odyssey, Jungle Book, Nutty Professor II and Amazing Spider-Man

2), Beethoven: Allegretto from Symph No. 7 (X-Men: Apocalypse), Elgar: Nimrod from Enigma Variations (Dunkirk and Australia). For finalised programme: www.cheltenhamssymphonyorchestra.info

Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra, Sat 14 May, 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, music by Schubert and Tchaikovsky, Cond. Jonathan Mann, Cello Rebecca McNaught

Charlton Kings Choral Society, Sat 21 May, 7.30pm, St Philip and St James's Church, Leckhampton, Vierne: Messe Solennelle for choir and two organs, John Rutter: Psalmfest



EMMA EDWARDS

STAGE & SCREEN

Promenade Productions: Dick Whittington, Thu 3- Sun 6 Feb, 7pm Thu and Fri, 12pm + 4.30pm Sat and Sun, The Playhouse, all the laughs and mayhem of traditional family pantomime! Book at cheltplayhouse.org.uk or call 01242 522852

National Theatre Live: The Book of Dust: La Belle Sauvage [12A], Thu 17 Feb, 7pm, Bacon Theatre, broadcast live from London's Bridge Theatre, book 01242 258002 or at bacontheatre.co.uk

Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society: Shrek the Musical, Tue 22- Sat 26th Feb, 7pm/2pm, Everyman, book online: everymantheatre.org.uk/shows/shrek

National Theatre Live: Henry V [12A], Thu 21 Apr, 7pm, Bacon Theatre, captured live from the Donmar Warehouse, book 01242 258002 or at bacontheatre.co.uk

Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, Tue 3- Sat 14 May, Town Hall, cheltenhamfestivalofperformingarts.co.uk

LECTURES & MEETINGS

Holst Victorian House: Victorian Childhood Exhibition Fri & Sat 10am-4pm, temporary exhibition extended until late Spring 2022, your last chance to see items on loan including original Punch and Judy puppets, holstvictorianhouse.org.uk

Cheltenham Local History Society, Tue 1 Feb, 10.30am, St Luke's Church Hall, Woodchester Mansion, an Unfinished Masterpiece, with Liz Davenport, cheltlocalhistory.org.uk

Cheltenham French Circle: Terres de France, Terres D'Outre mer, Mon 7 Feb, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Hall, GL53 7HP, with Cédric Cabanne,

cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk

Cheltenham Arts Society: The Loose and Airy Lightness of Flowers - Grinling Gibbons and his carving, Tue 8 Feb, 7.15pm, Jury's Inn Hotel, Gloucester Rd, GL51 0TS, with Bryony Hudson, theartsocietycheltenham.org.uk

Cheltenham Local History Society, Wed 16 Feb, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Hall, Katherine Parr, Gloucestershire's Queen: The Life, Loves and Times of the last wife of Henry VIII, with Mike Bottomley



JEREMY DUNCAN - RED



LORRAINE HOUSTON - SLIDING-GLASS

Cheltenham French Circle: Catherine II de Russie et Voltaire, Mon 21 Feb, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Hall, with Annie Kean, cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk

Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust, Mon 7 Mar, 7.15pm, St Luke's Church Hall, St Luke's Place, Sue Spielberg

gives an insight into designing a new garden around a house which was not yet built in the Whiteway, near Stroud. Further details on www.gglt.org

Cheltenham French Circle: 'Se taper un bœuf', Mon 7 Mar, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Hall, Le Groupe des Six dans le Paris d'après-guerre, with Emilie Capulet,

cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk

Cheltenham Arts Society: Shaken by an Earthquake: The Ballets Russes and the Astonishing Premiere of the Rite of Spring, Tue 8 Mar, 7.15pm, Jury's Inn Hotel, Gloucester Rd, with Sandy Burnett, theartsocietycheltenham.org.uk

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WRITER'S NETWORK

COMPETITION WINNERS AT THE 2021 LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Some people always journey armed with maps and satnavs, others just follow their noses, fly by the seat of their pants. There are those who look to the sky for direction, those who seek instead clues from the ground and those who look back to learn from the footsteps they have already trodden; characters who notice the minutiae, others who see only the bigger picture.

The theme of our competition last year was Signposts, the interpretations we received as diverse as this, the human condition. The Judges Carrie Etter (poetry) and Debbie Young (prose) had their work cut out for them but they chose winners who, as part of their prize, were given the opportunity to read their work at our event at The Times and The Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival 2021.

Writers often talk about finding their voice, their unique way of presenting things but it was also their physical presence, their intonations, emphasis and gestures that augmented the words. This, combined with the enthusiasm of the audience, the beautiful setting of The Queens Hotel and autumn's backdrop of playful colour through the windows, proved very special.

Personal factors have been important since the beginning of man, in aiding communication, improving understanding and strengthening bonds between communities. Covid brought with it challenges and we are all grateful to the internet for helping us via zoom

meetings etc. but for a few hours that day we were once again tribal and it was nice.

The anthology is available for others to share via our website.

Thank you to The Times and The Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival for supporting us, The Queens Hotel for hosting us and our sponsors Liggy Webb, The Cheltenham Arts Council and Helene Hewett of the Suffolk Anthology Bookshop.



SARAH HEMINGS POETRY WINNER WITH "EASTERTIDE"



PAULINE MASUREL PROSE WINNER WITH "I FOUND MYSELF LOST"



For further details please see our website

www.gloswriters.org.uk

PITTVILLE PUMP ROOM REVIVAL

TAKING THE WATERS IN 2021

Pittville Pump Room is endlessly cited as the only place where 'you can still taste Cheltenham's mineral water.'

For some time now, in fact since before Covid19 struck in March 2020, the water has not been available. There can be several reasons for this, the most usual being contamination of the tap. When this happens, the supply must pass two months' 'safe to drink' tests.



THREE OF THE SPEAKERS AND CHAIRMAN BEFORE THE EVENT: JOHN SIMPSON (CHAIR), CHRIS ARCHIBALD, CATHERINE MARTIN, STEVE BLAKE

By the time you read this, the supply may have been restored. Cheltenham Borough Council is currently (November 2021) installing a new pump in the well which is eighty feet below the floor in the main hall. The water is to be available again sometime in January 2022. Then there will be another (unofficial) test - to check what the mineral water tastes like. Since September 2017 there has been a discernible decline in its salinity and several blind tastings have not been able to differentiate between the mineral water and tap water. So, we await January with anticipation! Will it be the once distinctive, yet delightfully disgusting experience some people remember?

What, you may be asking, does any of this have to do with Cheltenham's heritage and its arts and culture as reflected in Perspectives? The short answer is that our group is working to ensure that

Cheltenham's most important heritage building is preserved, developed, interpreted and promoted in a way that



AN EAGER 'TASTER' WITH DESMOND AND SANDY MARSHALL (COOK)

acknowledges its Grade I listed status and its significant place in Cheltenham's history. One way of doing this is to raise awareness of the context in which the Pittville Estate was developed, and to explore this in more detail than does most of the published literature about the Pump Room itself.



AUDIENCE RELAXING DURING THE BREAK, WITH OUR FOURTH SPEAKER IN FAR LEFT, HILARY SIMPSON

With a generous grant from Cheltenham Arts Council, we 'put on a show,' grandly entitled "These Magnificent Rooms - The Season at Pittville Spa," during Heritage Open Days in September 2021. Four speakers gave short presentations on The Season in Cheltenham; the town's mineral waters; public breakfasts; and the people who formerly leased and lived in the Pump Room to manage and promote it. There were two sessions, and each was divided

by a break during which guests could taste some 'treats of the period' - biscuits and cake. This was much appreciated as people sat on the ground or brought their own folding chairs for the event! Everyone was given a pack of information about Pittville Park and Estate, the Pump Room, and illustrated summaries of the four talks. The full texts are now on Pittville History Works website.

Pittville History Works was awarded a Cheltenham Arts Council Annual Award in 2017 in recognition of its ground-breaking project to digitise information about the people who lived in Pittville from 1841 and to conduct original research into aspects of life in Pittville, ranging from education and names of houses to Pittville's soldiers



DESMOND AND SANDY MARSHALL (COOK) WITH 'TREATS OF THE PERIOD'

and the slave trade. Pittville Pump Room Revival was pleased to plan and present the Heritage Open Days 2021 event with them.

For further details please see our website
<https://pittvillehistory.org.uk/>

RSCDS CHELTENHAM

REEL PROGRESS FROM THE PROM

We jumped at the chance to join the Cheltenham Arts Council's publicity drive on The Promenade in September 2021, which had been organised to help local Arts groups to advertise their activities and recruit new members after a year or more of enforced hibernation.

Our colourful stall attracted attention and we were able to explain our love of Scottish Country Dancing, and its sociability and fun. It is great exercise for body, mind and spirit and you can find Scottish Country Dancers anywhere in the world. This opportunity, coupled with our new improved website (www.rscdscheltenham.org) bore fruit at our Open Evening the following Monday when we welcomed several newcomers to our group and everyone enjoyed a lively evening of simple Scottish Country Dances. Thank you to CAC for organising and supporting the publicity event, which we hope will be repeated in 2022.

RSCDS Cheltenham is up and running again, with a full programme of classes



and social dances planned for this season. At the time of writing we are preparing for the main event of the year, which is our Celebration Ball at the Town Hall in January. For all these events, the safety of our dancers is our watchword, particularly in the current circumstances.

We had really missed the joy of the dance and are all so glad to be dancing together again in person - even if it means dancing in an internal howling gale (all possible doors and windows open for ventilation) and with sticky, overly-sanitized hands. Dancing blows our cares away and makes us happy: for many of us, to coin a phrase - 'I dance, therefore I am'!

RSCDS Cheltenham is a branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society

STALLS ON THE PROM

A CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS IN CHELTENHAM

On Saturday 11th September, Cheltenham Arts Council organised a very successful Celebration of the Arts on the Promenade.

Our committee had been hoping to do something like this for a while, but it was thanks to the inspiration and organisation of trustee Martin Fry that we sprang into action. The aims were to give CAC member organisations some publicity and to show Cheltenham just how diverse and thriving the voluntary arts scene is in this lovely town, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

On a warm sunny day (thank goodness) twenty-five of CAC's 50-odd member organisations gathered on the Prom and started setting up their stalls. Stallholders included choirs, museums and local history societies, plus organisations championing gardening, art, dance, music, heritage, languages and more. Truly something for everyone! There was quite a buzz around the stalls, many of which were beautifully decorated. Stallholders handed out leaflets and chatted to passers-by in the hope of attracting new members / supporters, and also took the time to find out more about their fellow participants.

Those who took part were extremely enthusiastic about the experience, so much so that it looks like becoming an annual event. We have learnt to leave plenty of time to plan the licencing, stalls, participants and publicity! There's not much we can do about the weather, though, except to keep our fingers crossed.

Comments from the post-event questionnaire included:

"Very useful. Picked up new members and had useful discussions with the public"

"It was great for the club to be more exposed to the public and other organisations. We had many people visiting our stand who were very keen to learn more about our club and were interested in joining"

"It was lovely to feel part of a community event"



CHELTENHAM ARTS COUNCIL



BLUE MOON & GOTHERINGTON SINGERS



CHELTENHAM CAMERA CLUB



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THE ARTS SOCIETY



CHELTENHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN FRY

THE ARTS SOCIETY, CHELTENHAM

“WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD”

Thanks to members of The Arts Society Cheltenham (TASC) and their support for arts volunteering, and to a generous grant from Cheltenham Arts Council, the world came to St John’s Primary School on 16th September 2021 when our project “What A Wonderful World” finally went ahead after over a year’s delay due to Covid-19.

Arriving at the school gate with the drummer Kulcha-Lee and my car full to bursting with his African drums, the excitement about the day ahead was already much in evidence. The Reception children were fascinated both by the tall drummer himself in traditional costume and by the number of drums it is possible to fit into a small car! In no time at all, Kulcha-Lee was welcoming members of Year 5 to a room hung with colourful West Indian textiles and filled by a circle of drums and other percussion instruments, one for each pupil.

Next door in the school hall, Almudena was waiting to greet Year 3 pupils arriving for her Flamenco class. Together with their teachers they entered into the spirit of Spanish dance with gusto and the hall rang to clapping and stamping as they trained for their flamboyant finale later in the day.

Competition between the drummers and the dancers was far from restful, but in a nearby room a sense of Japanese calm prevailed as Year 2 pupils took on the challenge of printing, stitching and constructing their own unique windsock kite. For many, stitching the kite was their first time with a needle and thread. Susie had brought along wonderful images of

traditional Japanese kites as inspiration for the children who had a chance to try out their kites in front of the school.

In another corner of the school, Year 1 pupils were dusting, tracing and discovering egg tempura painting with Sarah. The joys of breaking eggs and mixing the yolks with paint! In the Reception classroom, Gemma, my completely indefatigable and committed collaborator at the school, was introducing the latest members of the school to the joy of singing together with an inspiring action song “You’re Amazing”, about the differences in appearance, language and ethnicity making each of us just that.

Over at Highbury church Year 4 pupils were busy with a drama workshop retelling the traditional Chinese folktale of The Seven Brothers with movement and dialogue. Quite a challenge to perfect it in time for the performance in the afternoon! For Year 6, Marie-Louise had aptly chosen to combine dance and song with the Louis Armstrong hit “What A Wonderful World”, which brought the afternoon’s performance of drumming, drama and dancing to a resounding close.

Whilst joining in with the song in Reception, the heading on a notice board caught my eye – “We are all unique but together we make one school”. An apt quotation for the day, when so many children were engaged in individual artistic expression, coming together at the end to celebrate one world. What better way to launch a new school year?



THE ARTS SOCIETY CHELTENHAM DELIGHTED THE CHILDREN OF ST JOHN’S PRIMARY SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2021 WITH THEIR PROJECT “WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD”

CHELTENHAM PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

A RETURN TO LIVE MUSIC

Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra was formed in 1895 and has been rehearsing and performing ever since. 2019 / 2020 was to have been the Orchestra's 125th Anniversary season, and four special concerts were planned in celebration of this amazing landmark. Sadly, the season was cut short by the pandemic and only two of the four concerts were able to take place. It was to be eighteen long months before we could meet again in person to enjoy making music together.

We returned to rehearsals in September 2021 and picked up the threads where we left off with music originally planned for our Spring Concert in March 2020. Inspired by the energy and enthusiasm of Conductor and Leader, Stephen and Sue Belinfante, we began eagerly preparing for our Autumn Concert in Pittville Pump Room. We were so pleased that all our members came back and we were also delighted to welcome a number of talented new members to join our ranks.

Encouraged by very good pre-concert bookings, there was an air of cautious excitement and anticipation on concert day in early November, as we assembled in the Pump Room and prepared to perform to a live audience for the first time since January 2020! The concert opened with the highly popular, patriotic, tone-poem "Finlandia" by Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. This work is special to the 'Phil' as it was conducted by Sibelius himself at a concert in Cheltenham Town Hall in 1909. It was well received by a large and enthusiastic audience.

Next, we were pleased to welcome dynamic, young, local cellist, Rebecca

McNaught, as our soloist for what surely must have been the highlight of our concert - Shostakovich's 1st Cello Concerto. Rebecca gave a brilliant performance of this exciting and powerful work. It is a composition of strong contrasts with its energetic first and final movements and its tender and hauntingly beautiful slow second movement, followed by the unaccompanied solo cadenza, which makes up the entire third movement. Rebecca performed this extremely challenging movement very powerfully, demonstrating her impressive technical skill and musical ability to a spellbound audience.

It was a great pleasure and a huge privilege for us to play with such a talented young cellist who is quickly making a name for herself as a soloist, chamber musician, orchestral player and teacher, both in this country and further afield. This performance was even more special for us as we have known Rebecca for some years and have followed her progress with great interest since she performed the famous Dvorak Cello Concerto with us in June 2016, after becoming 'Gloucestershire Young Musician of the Year' in 2015. In addition, both Rebecca's parents are members of the Orchestra, so it's a family affair!

The concert concluded with a return to Sibelius and a performance of his highly atmospheric and patriotic Second Symphony. During the four movements of the Symphony the listener is transported on a pastoral journey of mixed emotions from peace and tranquility to the depths of despair and finally to triumph over adversity and hope for the future. We felt that this work aptly captured our members' emotions during



PERFORMING AT PITTVILLE PUMP ROOM



SOLOIST, REBECCA MCNAUGHT

the lockdowns and their spirit of optimism and hope as we return to live music following a very difficult period. It was a very emotional moment for all of us when Stephen's baton finally went down for our concert performance of what has become one of our favourite works.

Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra was very pleased to receive a grant from Cheltenham Arts Council towards the professional fee of our soloist. We are always very appreciative of this generous support.

We felt that the concert went very well and was enjoyed by everyone. It was a joy to be able to play together again before such a warm and appreciative audience of loyal supporters; music is for sharing!

[Jenny Jones, Orchestra Treasurer](#)