



perspectives

CHELTENHAM ARTS CULTURE

Cheltenham Arts Council: awards_funding_publicity_events listings

June - September 2022

Writing a Jubilee verse

Beethoven Anniversary Concert • Awards Ceremony

Local events and festivals

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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

CONTENTS

WRITING A JUBILEE VERSE	2-3
BEETHOVEN ANNIVERSARY CONCERT	4
AWARDS CEREMONY	5 - 6
GLOUCESTERSHIRE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER	7 - 9
LISTINGS	10 - 14
CHELTENHAM TRUST PLANS FOR THE WILSON	15
WAR & PEACE - CHELTENHAM OPERA SOCIETY	16
THE ARTS SOCIETY CHELTENHAM	17
CHELTENHAM MUSIC SOCIETY	18
CHELTENHAM RAILWAY STATION PROJECT	19
WET SATURDAY IN NOVEMBER	20 - 21
CHELTENHAM CHAMBER MUSIC	22
COULD YOU SUPPORT US	22

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*Perspectives is produced three times a year.
The next issue will span October 2022 - January 2023.*

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



PERSPECTIVES TEAM

EDITOR RACHEL TEDD

DESIGN CHANTAL FREEMAN

LISTINGS ALICE HODSDON

ART CONSULTANT NIKI WHITFIELD

Dear Readers

Welcome to the June - September 2022 issue of Perspectives, which will be winging its way to you at the start of Volunteers' Week, an annual celebration of the contribution millions of people make across the UK through volunteering. Most of CAC's member organisations would not exist without volunteers, so a big Thank You to everyone who gives their time and effort to keeping voluntary arts organisations alive. If you're interested in finding out more about Volunteers' Week, see volunteersweek.org

Back in March, we had another celebration of volunteers in the shape of CAC's Annual Awards Ceremony. This was the first time we'd been able to hold the event since 2019, for obvious reasons, and it was lovely to be back at The Playhouse Theatre to recognise the outstanding contributions of our winners - see the article and photos later in the magazine. CAC has been busy dealing with grant applications. We award funds each spring and autumn from two different pots; firstly from Cheltenham Borough Council, to whom we are always grateful for supporting the arts in this way, and secondly from the Trafford Memorial Fund, which is administered by CAC itself. Grants will be available after our AGM, which this year is on Monday June 13th, at 7pm at Bethesda Methodist Church on Great Norwood Street. This year's speaker will be Laurie Bell, CEO of The Cheltenham Trust. It would be lovely to see as many CAC member organisations as possible represented at the meeting. This issue of Perspectives includes another varied selection of articles for you to enjoy. We start with the story of a remarkable opportunity to write a

new verse for the National Anthem in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Congratulations to Alexandra Brooke of Cheltenham Choral Society! We also hear reflections from Cheltenham Opera Society on the terrible situation in Ukraine and how it has affected them. You can find out how one CAC member organisation, The Arts Society Cheltenham, has been able to help another (Cheltenham Children's Choir) in recognition of the latter's contribution to the arts during the pandemic. It's always great to hear about mutual support between organisations, so if you have a story to tell along those lines, don't hesitate to write an article!

Cheltenham Camera Club has contributed two articles; one about their collaboration with GWR in brightening up railway station waiting rooms locally, and a second about the Gloucestershire Young Photographer competition winners, with some fantastic photos.

We hear about the challenges faced by Cheltenham Music Society in organising events in the Covid era, and find out how Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra finally managed to put on an event celebrating Beethoven's 250th anniversary after two years of delays. Congratulations to both organisations on their persistence. Our newest member organisation, The Cheltenham Trust, gives us an update on plans for The Wilson, and to top things off, there's a charming short story from one of CAC's executive committee. I hope you enjoy it!

Rachel Tedd

PERSPECTIVES EDITOR
editor@cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk

WRITING A JUBILEE VERSE

BY ALEXANDRA BROOKE OF CHELTENHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Alexandra – I have another idea. Could you write a “new” verse for us to sing?”

This was my invitation to write a ‘Jubilee update’ to the National Anthem. For two years, I have been singing with the wonderful Choir of the Earth (formerly the Self-Isolation Choir, an online singing community, which started in March 2020). To mark this platinum landmark, we had a special project – record a new arrangement of God Save the Queen and present it to Her Majesty at the beginning of June.

I’ve often tinkered about with poetry, but it was during the first lockdown that I found its creative process particularly soothing. Before long, I found myself writing pieces for the choir, as a way of marking the solace and sense of community it gave us when we couldn’t meet in person. The charismatic founder, Mark Strachan BEM, knew I was up for a creative challenge – hence the request to write new lyrics to one of the most iconic pieces of music in the country. No pressure!

Being the sort of girl who engages mouth (or keyboard) before brain, my reply was a great big fat YES! But how was I going to approach this? First I decided I would need to dig a bit deeper into the anthem – its message and style etc. Of course we all know the first verse, but what about the others? Since all my forebears hail from Ayrshire, I was glad to know the dodgy verse about quelling rebellious Scots had long gone (!!) so what we basically have in our national song is a plea that God guide the monarch through a long and successful reign (and I think it’s safe to say that request has been granted).

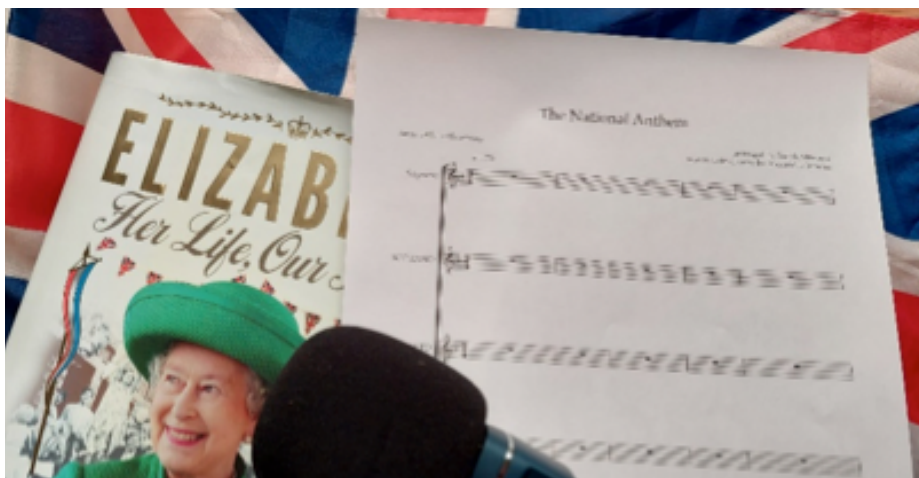
However, while the anthem as it stands looks forward in time, a jubilee looks



ALEXANDRA BROOKE

back on achievement, so that was my first thought in preparing a new verse; next I wanted to pay tribute to the Queen’s unerring sense of duty and service over these many decades. Lastly the project was to mark a great celebration, so the words had to be jubilant and I was told by the composer of the new musical arrangement (Ralph Allwood MBE) that he had done a rousing descant, so the words needed to be ‘splendid’.

One of the things I love about the creative writing process is starting out with bare bones, or a rough idea and then honing it – that process of having a word or phrase that’s OK for now, but really needs to be replaced by a better one further down the line. The melody is slow and stately with a strong rhythm and the sound of certain words suit this better than others. For example, at the beginning of line 2, it took me some time to find the right fit. I decided on ‘faithful to’ after discarding about 6 other options including ‘honouring’ and ‘following’. After a few days, a lot of scribbles and several appeals to friends and family to ‘tell me what you think’ I had a draft. I sent it to those who had to approve it and within the blink of an eye, my words



were on the score and my name was at the top.

The first time I heard my verse sung by trained singers (members of the Rodolfus Choir) was thrilling, spine-tingling and also rather humbling. To think that there are now (at the time of writing) hundreds of people around the world preparing to record my words is quite something (by mid-March 1900 people had signed up to the project). I just hope that I of all people, will remember to sing 'our' Queen, rather than 'the' Queen at the end. Old habits die hard!

Of course, on 6th February this year her majesty actually passed her 70-year landmark, but she has to wait until the summer for her party. Let's hope that, come June, the bells will peal out across the land and the world will raise its voice in song for our noble, gracious and glorious monarch.

Here is the finished version:

*Long she has served us now,
Faithful to every vow,
Great she has been.
Now let the bells all ring
and every nation sing,
To her our thanks we bring.
God save our Queen
For your great constancy,
We thank you, Majesty
And hail your jubilee!
God save our Queen.*

To listen to the verse sung by Choir of the Earth, go to <https://choiroftheearth.com/> on 2nd June 2022.

If you would like to sing Alexandra's verse with a local choir,
please contact her on mrsabrooke@yahoo.co.uk - she'd love to hear it!

CSO'S BEETHOVEN ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

A REVIEW FROM PAUL BROEKMAN

On 12th March 2022 the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra (CSO) was delighted to perform an all-Beethoven programme as a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. The concert at the Pittville Pump Rooms had been delayed from 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and was generously supported by Cheltenham Arts Council.

Prior to starting the concert, the CSO chairman David Banks announced that the orchestra would play the Ukrainian national anthem as a mark of respect and solidarity with the Ukrainian people and this was fully supported by the large audience, who stood as a mark of respect. The concert opened with the Coriolan Overture, a miniature tone poem describing the character and changing allegiances of Coriolan, a Roman consul, ending in his untimely death at the hands of his former friends.

Beethoven's violin concerto in D is one of the most popular in the repertoire and the CSO was delighted to be joined again by soloist Michael Foyle, for whom this was the 4th concerto with the orchestra. Those of us in the audience who had heard Michael's previous performances knew we were in for a treat. So it proved, with Michael's effortless playing and communication treating us to a performance of great expression

and musicality. Afterwards Michael confirmed he'd been anticipating the concert for some time and how great it was to hear the orchestra in such good form. Beethoven's 3rd Symphony, the Eroica,



MICHAEL FOYLE

was described by the composer as a 'Heroic Symphony'. It was the longest symphony ever composed until that point, and Beethoven himself conducted its first performance. Originally intended to be the 'Bonaparte Symphony', the composer scrubbed Napoleon's name from the title page when the latter declared himself Emperor. Maybe this also prompted Beethoven to use the idea of a funeral march for the traditional slow movement, written some 17 years before Napoleon's actual death! The CSO under David Curtis gave a stirring performance of this epic work with some fine playing by all sections of the orchestra and particularly the horns in the 3rd movement.

This was the orchestra's 3rd concert since Covid restrictions were lifted in late 2021 and the orchestra is delighted to be playing together again in front of increasingly large and supportive audiences.



EVERY ONE A WINNER

CAC'S ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY 2022

The Awards Ceremony is a highlight of CAC's year – a time to join artists, musicians, performers and practitioners across a wide spectrum of the arts in Cheltenham in celebration of excellence, achievement and commitment. This year was particularly special, being the first time we'd been able to hold the ceremony for two years due to the pandemic.

Cheltenham Camera Club over many years. Martin is an internationally recognized photographer and exponent of audio-visual art and has used his skills tirelessly in support of the wider community.

The Elizabeth Webster Cup – awarded to a young person excelling in the arts – was won this year by Sophia Jackson, for her outstanding contribution to Cheltenham



It was lovely to see the auditorium filled with family, friends and representatives of CAC's member organizations. CAC President and Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire Edward Gillespie, resplendent in full regalia, welcomed Councillor Martin Horwood, who spoke movingly about the importance of the arts and culture, particularly in these troubled times. The citations were read by CAC Chair Sue Silcock and presented by Martin Horwood and Edward Gillespie.

The Joyner Cup, for the most outstanding of the year's award winners, was won by Martin Fry in recognition of his inspirational support and leadership of

Children's Choir, her commitment to her own musical development, her mature leadership and artistic innovation within the choir and her encouragement and rapport with younger singers.

The Visual Arts Cup was won by Bob Gower, for his commitment to the Gardens Gallery, his involvement with the development, sustainability and success of this artistic community initiative, and his enthusiasm and tenacity in maintaining the profile of the gallery in order to facilitate a space for local artists to display their work.

The Opera Group Cup was awarded to Amber Smith, conductor of Cheltenham Children's Choir, for her drive and determination, inspirational teaching and leadership, her ability to make music making fun and enjoyable, her encouragement of each of the young musicians in her care to develop confidence in their own ability, and her ambition and determination in encouraging the choir to achieve their very best and entertain others to the highest standard.

The Charles Irving Sponsorship Award is awarded to a local business that has provided exceptional support through sponsorship of the voluntary arts in Cheltenham. This year, the recipient was photographer Paul Bridges for his high quality and professional pictures taken to support local theatre productions, his generosity towards amateur dramatic companies and his selflessness in promoting their events.

Five citations, in the form of framed certificates, were also awarded. The first of these was to the **Holst Victorian House Phase 1 Rebranding Project Team** - Mike Jenkinson, Martin Renshaw, Laura Kinnear, Lucy Moriarty, David Hewitt and Emily Barnard. The award recognised their dedication and leadership in the work to rebrand the Holst Birthplace Museum as Holst Victorian House, which involved commissioning new films, creating a new website and newsletters as well as organizing marketing, signage, redecoration of the building's exterior, volunteer training, fundraising and much more.

A citation was also awarded to **Molly Abbott** for her support of the growth and development of Cheltenham Open Studios, especially as Chair of the Association; for her level-headed leadership and generous spirit and for her commitment to the artistic community of Cheltenham.

Angela Walker received a citation for the significant and important contribution she has made to the musical life of Cheltenham in her role as secretary to both the Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra and Musica Vera Chamber Choir. Her support in bringing regular performances of live music to a variety of audiences has enabled both performers and listeners alike to find pleasure and meaning in their lives through music making.

Rod Davis was awarded a citation for his commitment to serving the voluntary arts in Cheltenham as a member of the Executive Committee and subsequently a trustee of the Cheltenham Arts Council. His wide knowledge of the voluntary arts scene in Cheltenham enhanced his significant contributions both as a committee member and as a trustee.

A citation was awarded to **John and Margaret Bristol**, for their long and enduring service to Cheltenham Bach Choir, as a valued chair and music librarian as well as stalwart and involved members of the choir. Cheltenham Bach Choir nominated them both to honour John's life, and his and Margaret's service to the choir.

CAC would like to thank Councillor Martin Horwood; CAC President and Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire Edward Gillespie; The Playhouse Theatre, its manager Paul Scott and its staff for hosting the Arts Awards Ceremony; and Richard McCleery of Cheltenham Camera Club for taking such splendid photos. Many thanks also to CAC Chair Sue Silcock, CAC trustee Martin Fry and CAC executive committee member Niki Whitfield for their hard work in organising the ceremony. Finally, many congratulations to all the award winners and thanks to everyone who attended the ceremony, ensuring that this year's event was a successful - and most enjoyable - occasion.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2022

FANTASTIC PICTURES FROM THIS YEAR'S COMPETITION

This competition was inaugurated by three members of Cheltenham Camera Club in 2004 and continues to go from strength to strength. Its principal aim is to encourage children to gain enjoyment through photography in capturing life as they see it. Open to both primary and secondary pupils in Gloucestershire, this year's competition attracted 806 entries from 33 schools.

Previously, each pupil entered one image, as a print, no larger than A4. Selected entries were displayed alongside Cheltenham Camera Club's members' prints in their annual exhibition. Beginning last year, the competition changed, with teachers uploading pupils' images on to a designated website. The judges then viewed all the images on a large screen to make their selection.

This year's four judges, Karin Wilson, James De Courcy, Dave Hyett and Martin Fry were most impressed by the breadth of subject matter captured in camera. It was indeed a difficult decision, taking hours of deliberation, to select those for printing and showing as the standard was high. Congratulations go to the winners and all those with selected images in the exhibition at Chapel Arts this May.

Gloucestershire Young Photographer and Cheltenham Camera Club are most grateful to the continuing support received from the Cheltenham Arts Council and the University of Gloucestershire to enable this competition and Exhibition to take place.

Primary Schools

1st	Susanna	Through the Glass Floor	Holy Trinity Primary, Cheltenham
2nd	Poppy	Dogs at Dinas	Warden Hill School, Cheltenham
3rd	Leland	The Great Eye	The Shrubberies School, Stonehouse

Best School Entry: Abbeymead Primary School

Secondary Schools

1st	Amelie	Restoring Time	Stroud High School
2nd	Charlotte	Endless Walk	Ribston Hall High School, Gloucester
3rd	Katie	Stuck in the Shadows	Churchdown School Academy



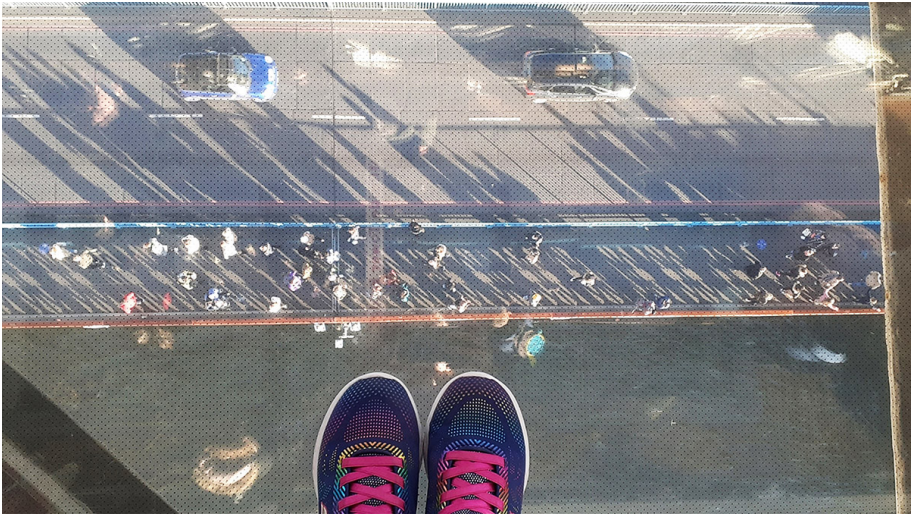
AMELIE - STROUD HIGH SCHOOL 'RESTORING TIME' — FIRST PRIZE



CHARLOTTE - RIBSTON HALL HIGH SCHOOL 'ENDLESS WALK' — SECOND PRIZE



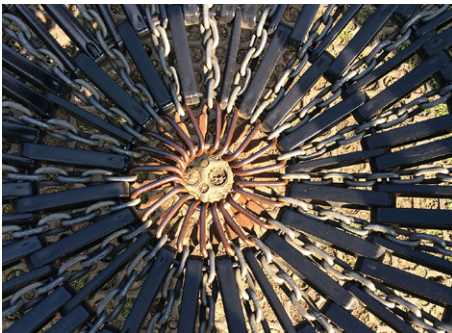
KATIE - CHURCHDOWN SCHOOL ACADEMY 'STUCK IN THE SHADOWS' — THIRD PRIZE



SUSANNA - HOLY TRINITY PRIMARY SCHOOL 'THROUGH THE GLASS FLOOR' — FIRST PRIZE



POPPY - WARDEN HILL SCHOOL
'DOGS AT DINAS' — SECOND
PRIZE



LELAND - THE SHRUBBERIES SCHOOL 'THE GREAT EYE' —
THIRD PRIZE

LISTINGS: EVENTS DIRECTORY JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2022

VISUAL ARTS

Roving Arts Exhibition,

Wed 8-Tue 14 Jun,
10am-5pm, free, Lower
Slaughter Village Hall, five
Cheltenham artists

Fresh: Art Fair,

Fri 10 - Sun 12 Jun,
Cheltenham Racecourse,
6000 original works of
contemporary art from 50
leading galleries

En Plein Air Art

Competition, Sat 11 Jun,
10am-5pm, Montpellier
Gardens, open to
traditional 2D artists of
all ages, abilities, media
and styles, the criteria to
get your work judged by
our expert panel is that
your entry is started and
completed in the gardens
on the day, within the
time allotted, and is made
in direct response to the
surroundings. To register,
visit wtscollective.co.uk

Cheltenham Paint Festival,

Fri 29 - Sun 31 Jul, big
walls will commence one
week earlier, please see
cheltenhampaintfestival.co.uk

Quartet of Artists + One

Exhibition, Wed 31 Aug -
Tue 6 Sep, 10am-5pm, free,
Lower Slaughter Village
Hall

**AT THE GARDENS
GALLERY, MONTPELLIER
GARDENS:**

Opening times vary,

Outside-In,

Wed 8 - Mon 13 Jun, work
created in response to
external spaces brings the
outdoors in. Evolving over
the week, mixing work
created in the moment
with work created on
reflection. From Sunday
onwards, incorporates
work created in the En
Plein Air Art Competition,
in direct response to the
space outside the gallery,
gardensgallery.co.uk

**Cheltenham Group of
Artists,**

Wed 15 - Tue 21 Jun,

Rosemary Frith,

Wed 22 - Tue 28 Jun,

Guiting Art Group,

Wed 29 Jun - Tue 5 Jul,

Cheltenham Fine Art,

Wed 6 - Tue 12 Jul,

Junction 12 Art Club,

Wed 13 - Tue 19 Jul,

Adele Riley: Scintilla,

Wed 20 -Tue 26 Jul,

Circle of Friends,

Wed 27 Jul - Tue 2
Aug, 10am-5.30pm, six
Cheltenham artists, various
subjects and styles

Andy Watt,

Wed 3 - Tue 9 Aug,

Caroline Hill,

Wed 10 - Tue 16 Aug,
workshop portraiture and
sculpture

Timothy Turton,

Wed 17 - Tue 23 Aug,
figurative painting

Junction 12 Art Club,

Wed 24 - Tue 30 Aug,

**Luba Arnold: Light and
Space,**

Wed 31 Aug - Tue 6 Sep,

Jill Hammond,

Wed 7 - Tue 13 Sep,

Simon Howe,

Wed 14 - Tue 20 Sep,

**Cheltenham Art Club
Autumn Exhibition,**

Wed 21 - Tue 27 Sep.



INKIE 2017-18 CHELTENHAM PAINT FESTIVAL

MUSIC

Cheltenham Choral Society Rehearsals,

Wednesdays, 7.30-9.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, a friendly, amateur choir with a long-standing reputation for providing a top-quality experience for both audiences and singers. Further details on the choir and its activities: cheltchoral.org.uk/

Cleeve Harmony A Cappella Chorus Rehearsals,

Wednesdays, 7.30-10pm, Bishops Cleeve Tithe Barn, new members welcome! See cleeve-harmony.org.uk or enquiries to md@cleeve-harmony.org.uk

Cheltenham Opera Society: The Golden Cockerel, Rimsky-Korsakov,

Mon 30 May, English Touring Opera, Theatre Royal, Bath, with society supper at The Garrick's Head. The Society welcomes non-members at an additional charge of £5.00 to most events and should anyone be interested in joining us at this opera, if tickets should still be available, please contact via cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk



PAUL WEST - BETWEEN WARKWORTH AND ALNMOUTH, LOOKING EAST, WWW.PAULWESTART.CO.UK

Cleeve Harmony: Learn to Sing in Four-Part Harmony, Wed 8, 15, 22 and 29 Jun, 8-9pm, Bishops Cleeve Tithe Barn, only £10 for all four sessions. Contact lts@cleeve-harmony.org.uk

Cheltenham Opera Society: Orfeo, Monteverdi, Thu 9 Jun, Garsington Opera, the Society welcomes non-members, please see cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk

Chapel Arts and CMFS, Fri 10 Jun, 1pm, free, Pupils of Sir Thomas Rich's School, Gloucester. See thechapelarts.com/free-friday-lunchtime-concerts/

Chapel Arts and CMFS, Fri 17 Jun, 1pm, free, The Scott Trio (trombone, piano, voice). See thechapelarts.com/free-friday-lunchtime-concerts/

Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra Summer Concert, Sun 19 Jun, 3pm, £14, students £7, u-16 free, Pittville Pump Room, Copland: Billy the Kid, Griffes: Poem for Flute and Orchestra, with Bhavandeep Stephenson - Flute, Dawson: Folk Symphony, book via cheltenhamtownhall.org.uk or 01242 528764

SUE DURKIN - COS MEMBER,
CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.
ORG.UK



Chapel Arts and CMFS,

Fri 24 Jun, 1pm, free, Pupils of Cheltenham Ladies' College. See thechapelarts.com/free-friday-lunchtime-concerts/

Cheltenham Opera Society: *Rusalka*, *Dvořák*,

Fri 24 Jun, Garsington Opera, the Society welcomes non-members, please contact via cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk

Cheltenham Choral Society: *Coronation Classics*,

Sat 25 Jun, 1.15pm, free, Gloucester Cathedral, informal lunchtime recital to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. Music by Handel, Parry, Walton, Harris, Tye, Redford, Vaughan Williams, Wood and Tallis. See cheltchoral.org.uk

Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra,

Sat 25 Jun, 7.30pm, £16 (inc. drink), students £8, children free, Pershore Abbey, Hungarian Dances 5&6: Brahms, Rococo Variations: Tchaikovsky (Cello Soloist: Rebecca McNaught), Symph. No. 9 in E minor 'From the New World': Dvořák. Tickets, in support of Farmers Overseas Action Group, from FOAG on 01886 853295, and at the door

Chapel Arts and CMFS,

Fri 1 Jul, 1pm, free, The Pearl Trio (violin, clarinet, voice). See thechapelarts.com/free-friday-lunchtime-concerts/

Cheltenham Bach Choir, and The Backbeat

Percussion Quartet, Sat 2 Jul, 7.30pm, Town Hall, David Fanshawe: African Sanctus, Bob Chilcott: A Little Jazz Mass. With Claire Rutter, Soprano. cheltbachchoir.com

Musica Vera: Songs

for Summertime, Sat 2 Jul, 7.30pm, £12, NHS £9, u-18 free, St Mary's Church, Prestbury, music to include English Part Songs 16th-20th Centuries, English Folk Songs, arrangements by Vaughan Williams, Howells, Stanford, Elgar, Finzi, Ireland, Parry and Holst. Tickets at the door or from The Playhouse, cheltplayhouse.org.uk

Cheltenham Children's Choir: Platinum Jubilee

Concert, Sun 3 Jul, 2-5pm, Pittville Pump Room, collaborative summer project, giving the children joyous opportunities to celebrate and enjoy music, sing and play together and perform to a wider audience



UNTITLED, ACRYLIC ON PAPER, EMMY FRANKS
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.HADFIELDFINEART.CO.UK

Cheltenham Opera Society: Così fan

tutte, Mozart, Fri 8 Jul, Garsington Opera, with society picnic tent. The Society welcomes non-members, please contact via cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk

Cleeve Chorale: Disney and Rodgers and Hammerstein favourites,

Sat 9 Jul, Woodmancote Village Hall, for tickets and further details see cleevechorale.co.uk

Cheltenham Opera Society: Così fan

tutte, Mozart, Wed 20 Jul, Garsington Opera, with society picnic tent. The Society welcomes non-members, please contact via cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk

Holst Birthday Concert with Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra,

Sat 17 Sep, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, works by Gustav Holst, Charles Villiers Stanford and Ralph Vaughan Williams, inc. first performance in the UK of Holst's 'lost' manuscripts, two pieces discovered in New Zealand in 2017

Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra,

Sat 24 Sep, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, music by Mozart and Beethoven, Conductor: Timothy Carey, Piano: Adam Heron

STAGE

National Theatre Live: Prima Facie, [15], Thu 21 Jul, 7pm, Bacon Theatre, captured live from the Harold Pinter Theatre, Jodie Comer makes her West End debut in the UK premiere of Suzie Miller's award-winning play. Book 01242 258002 or at bacontheatre.co.uk

Promenade Productions, July, tbc, please see promenadeproductions.co.uk for the latest details

Open Air Theatre Festival, Tue 2 - Fri 12 Aug, Tuckwell Amphitheatre, the very best in touring open-air theatre from across the UK, plus 'Cinema Under the Stars', see bacontheatre.co.uk

LECTURES & MEETINGS

Cheltenham Arts Society: Day of Special Interest: The Art and Scandalous Lives of the Bloomsbury Group, Thu 9 Jun, 10am, Bowling Club, Suffolk Square, with lecturer Frank Woodgate. Booking required, see theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk or email Studydayva.cheltenham@theartssociety.org

Art Appreciation talks, £5 per session, Chapel Arts, David Addison gives three talks a month. June's topics are British Aspects of Rural Life and July's are British Urban Life. Please see thechapelarts.com

Cheltenham French Circle: Dîner annuel, Mon 13 Jun, Côte Brasserie

Cheltenham Arts Society: Seaside Modern: Art on the Beach, Tue 14 Jun, 7.15pm, members/first time visitors free, repeat guests £7.00, Jury's Inn Hotel, Gloucester Rd, with James Russell, theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk

Prestbury Local History Society, Mon 27 Jun, 7.30pm, visitors £2, members free, Prestbury W.I. Hall, Around St Mary's Churchyard, with Tony Noel. prestburyhistory.com

Hidden in a Drawer: Gustav Holst's Lost Manuscripts, July-December, Holst Victorian House, exhibition centred on Holst's 'lost' manuscripts, two pieces discovered in New Zealand in 2017, holstvictorianhouse.org.uk

Cheltenham French Circle, Mon 19 Sep, 7.15pm, St Luke's Church Hall, new season begins with a talk by Vincent Raymond-Barker, cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk

Cheltenham Local History Society, Wed 21 Sep, 7.30pm, St Luke's Church Hall, The Gloucestershire Regiment in Europe, 1944 and 1945, with Dr Timothy Brain

Prestbury Local History Society, Mon 26 Sep, 7.30pm, visitors £2, members free, Prestbury W.I. Hall, Prestbury High Street in Living Memory, with David Jones. prestburyhistory.com

PLANS FOR THE WILSON MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

AN UPDATE FROM THE CHELTENHAM TRUST

The Cheltenham Trust is pleased to announce the complete re-design of The Wilson Museum and Art Gallery.

The significant refurbishment of the internal layout and spaces at Cheltenham's leading cultural hub will create a vibrant new arts café and flexible ancillary spaces on the ground floor, the Sir Charles Irving Community Art Gallery on the mezzanine first floor, and new artists' studios on the third floor.

The £500,000 scheme has been funded by a £250,000 bequest from the Sir Charles Irving Trust and matched funding from Cheltenham Borough Council.

Interaction, the award winning Bath-based commercial design and build company, is delivering the implementation of the re-design.



Louis Eperjesi, chair of the board of trustees of The Cheltenham Trust, said: "We are delighted to announce this exciting re-design of The Wilson.

"After months of hard work to create the right designs, we are pleased to unveil these for everyone to see this new dynamic cultural hub for the whole community, and visitors to Cheltenham. The Wilson will offer café culture complemented by a comprehensive cultural programme featuring talks, workshops, creative events, local

and national exhibitions and shows, showcasing the very best of Cheltenham's cultural community and history. Re-opening in July, the re-design will re-establish The Wilson inviting new audiences and increased footfall."

Since the initial funding was secured from the Sir Charles Irving Trust in summer 2020, the trust recognised, following a tendering process, that this funding would not enable the creation of an improved, significant visitor destination.

A robust business case was developed to seek further funding support, and Cheltenham Borough Council awarded matched funding in autumn 2021. A preferred supplier was appointed based on the tendering process to produce designs for the ground floor, the mezzanine and, in addition, the third floor for new artists' studios.



The Wilson has announced its new We Are Creators artist bursary and youth fellowship programmes, applications open on Tuesday 3 May for the seven bursaries in the new artists' studios. For more information on We Are Creators visit www.cheltenhammuseum.org.uk

WAR AND PEACE

REFLECTIONS FROM CHELTENHAM OPERA SOCIETY

Grand, melodramatic opera and the war in Ukraine seem worlds apart; but even Cheltenham Opera Society has been hit by the war. The Russian State Opera were due to bring *Aida* to The Everyman Theatre; then Putin struck, the visit of the 'Russian' opera company was cancelled, and the Ukrainian members of the company, it is reported, went home to fight against Russia.

But *Aida* would have been an appropriate opera for the Company to perform. The background to the story is military invasion and consequent cruelty, enslavement and execution. Against this background *Aida* (an Ethiopian) and Radames (Egyptian) attempt to transcend the divisions of race and nation. Remove from the opera the exotic paraphernalia of 'Egyptian' costume and scenery, and the story is contemporary. The population of Ukraine is divided between Russians and Ukrainians ('Ethiopia' and 'Egypt'), and many Ukrainians live across the border in Putin's Russia. Perhaps Lenin, in creating the Ukrainian State, hoped that a pluralist entity might become united by common Socialist principles. As in *Aida*, so now in the real world we see the tragic consequences of failing to overcome those forces that prefer to divide rather than unite.

Or, in short, opera is not merely about big voices in fancy dress milking applause from audiences in evening dress - as I hope the popularity of Cheltenham Opera Society shows. We have just completed a superb cycle of Wagner's *The Ring*, free to members and enhanced by talks on the genesis of the cycle and the unifying musical motifs. From the other end of the

musical spectrum, in March we presented a unique Baroque pastiche (from the Met.) of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with music lifted from Handel, Rameau and Vivaldi. Among many highlights was Plácido Domingo (surrounded by flying mermaids) revealed as 'Neptune, the God' to the music of Zadok the Priest.

We are replacing the staging of *Aida* at The Everyman with an introductory talk on the comparative rarity, Janacek's *The Markopoulos Case*, for which we have already reserved seats at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff this Autumn. Before that we have seats for ETO's *The Golden Cockerel* in the Theatre Royal in Bath, and for *Così fan Tutte*, *Rusalka*, and Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in the wonderful glass theatre in the parkland where Garsington Opera perform in June/July. Not to mention one of the most popular events of our season: our AGM (!), which is always well attended because it is also our annual dinner and where we have screened some remarkable performances in the past: Ingmar Bergman's *The Magic Flute*, for instance, and, to return to Russia, Solti conducting an all-Russian *Eugene Onegin*. Copyright restrictions prevent us advertising our DVDs on our website (cheltenhamoperasociety.org.uk) but I hope to stay within the boundaries of the law if I mention that this year the opera (Glyndebourne production) has a hairdressing theme.

Malcolm Kelsall

CHELTENHAM CHILDREN'S CHOIR RECEIVE COMMUNITY GRANT

BY ELISE FORBES OF THE ARTS SOCIETY CHELTENHAM

Towards the end of 2021, each local Arts Society in the country was offered the opportunity to apply for a Community Grant of £250 from the Society's national headquarters in London, specifically to support a local organisation which had made a significant contribution to the Arts throughout the Covid pandemic.

As the Arts Volunteering member of The Arts Society Cheltenham, I looked around for a suitable beneficiary, asked for some thoughts from Cheltenham Arts Council and found out more about the activities of Cheltenham Children's Choir and its leader, Amber Smith. Once I had met Amber and heard first-hand about her success in keeping the young members of all three choirs singing together via Zoom during the Covid lockdowns, as well as her ambitious plans for bouncing back from September 2021 onwards, it soon became clear that I had found the perfect recipient of our Community Grant.

It was given to Amber in order to support the celebratory Christmas concert involving all three choirs and some solo performances at St Philip and St James church on Saturday 11th December. It was a completely joyous occasion after all the difficulties experienced during the Covid period, and TASC was particularly pleased to play a small part in a wonderfully varied evening of live music performed with great confidence for an enthusiastic audience clearly delighted to be out and about again.

We were delighted to nominate Amber for the Opera Group Cup (see separate article) and to see her presented with the award on stage at The Playhouse in March, together with one of her very supportive young choir members, Sophia, who won the Elizabeth Webster Cup, nominated by Amber herself.

There are all kinds of ambitious plans for the choir in the future, not least a summer Sunday afternoon concert at Pittville Pump Room on 3rd July this year.

WEB cheltenhamchildrenschoir.co.uk

WEB theartsocietycheltenham.org.uk



THE JOYS OF PROMOTING CONCERTS IN THE COVID ERA

BY DAVID PEPPER, CHELTENHAM MUSIC SOCIETY

Cheltenham Music Society would be celebrating its 75th season this October were it not for the loss of the 2020-21 season to Covid. But the good news is that our 2021-22 season has been a great success, despite plenty of initial nerves and some nail-biting moments.

Our first concert last October featured the Busch Trio, three amazing young musicians who live in Amsterdam. We were daunted when we investigated the post-Brexit visa and Covid regulations they would have to navigate. Our anxiety was not quelled until we heard they had safely arrived in the UK, and we were able to stand down the trio we had lined up as a “hot spare”.

After that we thought we were home and dry, but we relaxed too soon. The season’s highlight was to be another visit by the Takács Quartet, one of the world’s finest, who are based in Colorado. On January 4th, only two weeks before our concert, they cancelled their European tour because of Covid. Some very fast footwork by our energetic programme secretary Penny Steer secured an excellent young quartet to fill the slot. Phew.

Home and dry. Well, until just three days before the next concert, to be given by another star group, the Jerusalem Quartet: their agent told us their violist had gone down with Covid. Luckily they immediately found a stand-in and the concert was saved. But their programme was completely changed, so I had to shred

the glossy programme notes already printed, write some more and have a cheap-and-cheerful new version printed. Phew again.

And I nearly forgot to mention the first concert in our contemporary music series, which was cancelled on the day because the soprano woke up with a heavy cold. Penny and I had to sit at the venue door delivering the bad news to those customers whom we hadn’t been able to contact. Fortunately we managed to reschedule that concert later in the season.

But in the end the season was a real success, and we heard some glorious music-making. Great credit to all our Committee who had to help with the last-minute panics. And now we are getting ready for the next season – more glorious music which you will find advertised in this edition. Do join us!

WEB cheltmusicoc.co.uk

CHELTENHAM RAILWAY STATION PROJECT

HOW CCC IS BRIGHTENING OUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCE!



Each year Cheltenham Camera Club celebrates the town by holding a club competition capturing an aspect of Cheltenham.

It was while a member was taking a picture of Lansdown station for this competition that a conversation with the manager initiated a joint photographic project. After further conversations sharing members' prints, the project developed to have exhibitions in both of the waiting rooms at Cheltenham station. GWR redecorated the waiting rooms, and frames were installed that can be easily opened to change the images on a rolling programme.

Work shown includes a wide range of members' work as well as images celebrating the town and the county of Gloucestershire. The first exhibition was formally opened by the Mayor of Cheltenham last Autumn. Since then images have been changed to reflect our sporting heritage for Gold Cup Week. The project has been such a success that Cheltenham Camera Club is now working with GWR to enhance the railway stations across Gloucestershire.

Martin Fry



WET SATURDAY IN NOVEMBER

A SHORT STORY BY PHIL JONES, CHELTENHAM WRITERS' CIRCLE

The rain was very soft and very gentle and was being very kind to any flower that had had the intestinal fortitude to hang on until the first week of November. The rain was soft, gentle, kind and very, very persistent. It had been soft, gentle and kind for a day and a half and Sister Barbara was struggling to remain charitable even though she knew that the diaphanous grey curtain must all be part of God's rich plan.

She opened the door of her little room, went in and switched the light on although it was only five minutes short of mid-day. The shutters at the small square window were open but there wasn't enough light coming in to see what she was doing without the help of the single forty-watt bulb that hung from the ceiling. She was fond of her cell. She wasn't, she knew, supposed to call it that any more but, although she didn't call it that to anybody else, she did to herself. It was her only little rebellion and she felt sure that her God would be happy to indulge her in that one little kick against the traces.

Two letters had been left towards the foot of the simple white bed cover. She picked them up, walked towards the window and pulled the upright ladder-back pine chair around so that it was sideways on to the aperture.

She opened the first envelope, the one with her mother's handwriting, and pulled out the folded letter. She opened it up and smiled and was cross. How many times had she told them? How many times had she told them not to send money? They knew that all her worldly needs were catered for in the convent. They knew that she would have wished for the money to

go to a better cause. If they'd just send their money straight to charity it would be one less job for her to do. She counted it. Five twenty-pound notes. One hundred pounds! What did they suppose she was going to do with a hundred pounds?

She chided herself. Her parents were lovely and she was being uncharitable again but she had told them often enough. She looked out of the window and noted that the street-lights were already on at mid-day; already on or maybe still on from the previous night.

The nearest lamp was a few yards down the pavement from her window and spread its dull yellow glow downwards to form an indistinct puddle of light on the pavement below. The man leant against the lamppost and tried to light the stub of a cigarette beneath the shelter of the wide brim of a felt hat that had seen far, far better days. Even from where she sat, Sister Barbara could see the stains on the old, threadbare raincoat, the collar of which had been pulled up around a scraggy neck covered in grey stubble.

The match flickered and went out and the man flicked it disgustedly into the gutter. He pulled a matchbox out of his raincoat pocket. He must have known that it was empty but he opened it and peered in anyway. Finally convinced, he flung it after the match into the gutter and then sent the fag-end in a spinning arc after it. He let himself slide slowly down the lamppost until he was squatting on his haunches. He stared down at the wet flagstones, water dripping off the brim of his hat onto the knees of the trousers that poked up through the flaps of the Mac.

Sister Barbara looked at him and felt so very sorry. Then she looked down and she

saw the five twenty pound notes in her hand. Without hesitation she ran across to her little chest of drawers and found a piece of paper and a pencil. She scrawled 'Don't despair, Sister Barbara' on the piece of paper and then began to scabble around for something to weight it. She didn't have to look far. The collection of little stones that she'd picked up from the beach last year when she'd been with Sister Agnes formed a small circle on top of the dresser. All part of God's plan, she realised.

She picked out the heaviest of the stones, wrapped the twenty-pound notes around it and wrapped it all up in the piece of paper. She found an elastic band in her bedside drawer and twisted it around and around the paper to keep everything in place.

She went back to the window and was relieved to see that the man was still there. She opened the window and shouted but he didn't hear. She shouted as loudly as she could but still he didn't hear. He began to stand up and she was frightened that he was going to go. Quickly she drew back her arm and heaved the package towards him, grateful suddenly for those hours of fielding at deep mid-on for her three older brothers.

The package carried over the strip of grass and cleared the railings before hitting the floor beside him and scuttling across his line of vision like a startled mouse. The man turned to see where the object had come from and saw Sister Barbara in the window jabbing an imperative finger towards the intrusive object. He bent forward, picked it up and began to remove the elastic band. He unfolded the piece of paper, read the instruction and counted the notes.

He looked up to her, pointed at the notes, shrugged and splayed his hands in puzzlement.

"They're yours," Sister Barbara cried. He cupped a hand to an ear and she shouted even louder but couldn't make him hear. She jabbed a plump finger at him and he seemed to understand. He tipped his hat to her, turned and set off down the road shaking his head.

Satisfied, Sister Barbara sat down and began to open her second letter.

By the time that the sisters had finished their evening meal and left the refectory, the rain had deigned to stop being soft, gentle and kind. Sister Barbara was walking towards the bottom of the stairs when Sister Grace tugged at the sleeve of her habit.

"Sister Barbara," she said, "there's a man at the south door who wants to speak to you."

Sister Barbara was lost for words. She went to the door and opened it and there was the man from under the lamp. Up close he looked less dissolute than she'd expected and his eyes had a nice twinkle when he smiled.

He pressed something bulky into her hands and she looked down. It was a huge bundle of banknotes.

"£8,000 pounds, Sister," he said. "I'd never have believed it. 'Don't Despair' came in at 80-1. I'm impressed. What are you tipping for the Paddy Power Gold Cup at Cheltenham next week?"

Cheltenham
CHAMBER MUSIC

*Cheltenham Music Society presents its 2022-23 season
All concerts are in the Pittville Pump Room at 7.30pm*

<i>Thursday 6 October</i>	<i>Guy Johnston (cello) and Tom Poster (piano)</i>
<i>Tuesday 15 November</i>	<i>Elias String Quartet</i>
<i>Thursday 8 December</i>	<i>Eblana String Trio</i>
<i>Tuesday 24 January 2023</i>	<i>Magnard Ensemble</i>
<i>Thursday 16 February</i>	<i>Jubilee String Quartet</i>
<i>Tuesday 21 March</i>	<i>Charles Owen and Katya Apekisheva (Piano Four Hands)</i>
<i>Thursday 20 April</i>	<i>Consone String Quartet</i>

For full programme and booking details visit www.cheltmusicsoc.co.uk

COULD YOU SUPPORT CHELTENHAM ARTS COUNCIL?

CAC has three roles to fill:

- Hon. Secretary
- Editor of Perspectives magazine
- Social media (CAC's Facebook & Twitter feeds)

If you're interested in joining the friendly CAC team, please contact Sue Silcock (Chair) by email: silcock.sue1@gmail.com

