

# KENDAL SOUTH CHOIR

## Newsletter 21 – Christmas 2020

**Geoff and all the Committee wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a (subdued) New Year!**

As requested, many of you have also sent wishes which are included in this newsletter, together with potted histories of your choral lives and favourite pieces of music which could be included in a simple concert that we might perhaps put on when we're able to get back together. Some of them have links to YouTube recordings – just click the link.

Geoff is particularly anxious that, when we do finally get back together, we shouldn't sing anything too demanding of our voices, as many of us won't have opened our mouths in song since March.

Thank you to everyone for being so obliging about getting the *Zimbe!* and *Mass in Blue* scores back to us. All *Zimbe!* scores were eventually rounded up and returned to the publisher. It was an entertaining exercise!

All the *Mass in Blue* copies, which are the choir's own, are marked up with library numbers so that when we finally get to sing it again each member will have the copy with their own markings.

### Christmas Quiz

The Committee has put its individual thinking caps on and has provided a very varied quiz, which is attached to this newsletter.

There are no prizes, so we don't mind if you look up the answers online! Answers available on request.

We've been made aware of this Christmas Eve online event from RunbySingers:

**'Carols with Brass'** : Christmas Eve : online. Join Matt Finch, the amazing Mike Daniels Brass Quintet and our hand-picked backing choir to sing Carols together online at 4.00 pm on Christmas Eve.

We plan to sing many of your favourite carols including *Hark the Herald* and *O Come all ye Faithful* – complete with the well-loved Willcocks brass arrangements, fanfares and descants. Other well known carols for choirs will be featured including *The Holly and the Ivy*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, a new arrangement of *Silent Night* by Matt Finch (which he will teach us) and a couple of more light-hearted pieces – *Rocking around the Christmas Tree* and *Sleighride*. The words will be on the screen, and the event will be a YouTube broadcast so if our preferred time of 4.15pm doesn't suit, you can join in at a later time.

Tickets £10 :  
Website <https://www.runbysingers.online/>

### Money Matters

#### Accounts 2019/20

The last Newsletter forecast the result for the year as being a surplus of just over £2,000.

The accounts are now finalised and have been passed by the Examiner and, after adjusting for advance payments and receipts, show a surplus of £2,165. This will be available towards the cost of our next concert. When this will be is not known due to Covid-19, which has already resulted in the loss of two concerts and the future is still very uncertain. The December Nativity has been lost and the rescheduled *Zimbe* and *Mass in Blue* hoped to be in May 2021 has also been put on hold as

it seems unlikely that rehearsals will be able to start in January which would be essential. The logistics of arranging the school choirs and Amabile would also be extremely difficult. It is not forgotten and hopefully can be rearranged some other time.

The grants which had been obtained towards Zimbe have now lapsed and new applications will have to be made. It is hoped some easier singing may be possible in May. You will get a copy of the accounts in due course as the Committee hopes to arrange the AGM in the new year by Zoom.

#### Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile

The appeal last time for more use of this easy way of raising funds seems to have borne some fruit as we have since received just over £57 from EasyFundraising and some income from Amazon Smile. Keep up the good work.

#### Subscriptions

Consideration remains in abeyance until we know when we can resume, the size of the choir and the kind of works we shall be able to put on.

#### Section Reps:

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[www.kendalsouthchoir.org.uk](http://www.kendalsouthchoir.org.uk)

#### **GEOFF FIELD**

Best wishes to everyone! I'm confidently looking forward to us all meeting again next year.

#### **DOROTHY DAVIES**

Christmas greetings to all my fellow choir members. One day we will be able to meet and sing again, but not just yet. In the meantime I hope you are all singing to yourselves to keep up your spirits and listening to all the beautiful music that is still available to us, just not live. Your committee are meeting via zoom and, as you can imagine, constantly having to change plans as the Covid situation changes. You can rest assured that as soon as we are allowed to meet again we will be ready! Take care everyone and enjoy Christmas as best you can.

#### **BETTY WOOD**

Just wishing everybody a warm, cosy Christmas. Here's Goodbye to 2020 and Hello 2021.

I didn't join a choir until I moved to Ormskirk in the early 2000s. Although I sang "*cerdd dant*" as a primary school child. In secondary school I wasn't allowed in the choir as I misbehaved during singing lessons. I suspect that this was because of the exhilaration I got out of singing!! Since joining choral societies, besides meeting people, I find that the concentration required allows one to be removed from other problems. You are dependent on each other, yet independent, and of course the simple pleasure of making music.

*(JR: For those who don't know – I didn't – "*cerdd dant*" is a unique Welsh tradition of singing poetry over a harp melody. A lovely example at*

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ur6Aab1SFo8>*)

Favourite piece: All through the night (hummed)

## **GWEN MAJOR**

Wishing Geoff and all the choir members a very happy Christmas and a better New Year in 2021. It's been such a long time since we last sang together and I really miss our weekly rehearsals. I'm really looking forward to getting together again and making music.

I've been in a choir ever since schooldays – first in my school choir, then in Durham University Choral Society. When I lived in Cleveland I was a member of Guisborough Choral Society and then joined Kendal South when we moved to Cumbria in 1999. There's nothing quite like singing with other voices and I've always found there's nothing better for lifting the spirits. Since lockdown I've been singing online with the Self-Isolation Choir which has been a real life-saver with twice weekly rehearsals leading up to online concerts of Messiah, Elijah & now a Christmas concert on December 20th. It's not the same as face to face singing but definitely better than nothing and quite an experience with over 1,000 choir members worldwide.

Favourite piece: Panis Angelicus by César Franck.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5-a6Z-REDA>

## **MARGARET WILSON**

Happy Christmas to everyone! I hope you're OK, as we all carry on carrying on. It has been a rough time feeling cut off from so much. Somehow singing along to a CD in the kitchen isn't the same as our Tuesday nights with Kendal South, and it will be wonderful to be back together again, singing with Geoff. At least that's looking a bit nearer now. See you soonish, and warmest wishes for a better New Year!

My family loved music. Dad was in the Bach Choir and played the piano – usually Bach. I got into choral singing when I was at school. You didn't have much choice as the Director of Music was fierce. She had been taught by Gustav Holst at St Paul's Girls' School in

London and was very good, and we sang a huge variety of music, so I actually owe her a lot. I was put into the Alto section because she needed a few more. That taught me about the interwoven texture of music, even if I wasn't a natural alto. (I was 'kicked upstairs' when I joined the St Paul's Festival Choir in London and was told by the conductor, Richard Latham, 'You're not an Alto – you're just a lazy Soprano!').

From university onwards I have always been a member of a choral society, in total 8 over the years, plus a small madrigal group, and sang in 3 church choirs, most memorably in St Michael and all Angels Presbyterian Church in Blantyre, Malawi, when I was a VSO. The Scottish Minister set some hymns to Ngoni tunes, often led by a cantor, and then everyone came in (rather faster) on about the third bar of every line, sometimes all of us together. The sound echoing around the huge old building was thrilling.

Choral Music has meant so much to me. There's the music itself, always new, and even if you've sung the 'St John Passion' 5 times there will still be new angles to explore. Then there is the fun and challenge of decoding this different 'language' and gradually making it your own, and working together with people who share your passion and who become friends. There is something unique about this activity. It doesn't matter where you are, in this grounds you, gives you a feeling of belonging, in a place and also in a long tradition of beautiful sound, 'of infinite variety'.

I have missed it terribly over these months. Not being allowed to sing in church either (when it's been open) has been painful. I hum behind my mask.

Favourite pieces: Ubi Caritas, no 1 of his Quatre Motets, by Duruflé, or, as a complete contrast, 'The bold grenadier', first line "As I was a-walking".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-LQve92U1o>

### **JEAN AND ARTHUR ROBINSON**

We both wish everyone, especially Geoff, a wonderful Christmas, with high hopes for all of us being able to get back together as soon as “things” allow!

We were both brought up as Methodists, so music is in our blood! I used to love singing at school, especially in primary school singing along with the radio with “Singing Together” with William Appleby and William Blezard. I sang with Kendal High School’s award-winning Junior Choir and later with Greenside Choir, both with the indomitable Madge Hine.

After our marriage our first choir (Arthur’s first choir full stop!) was the University of East Anglia choir under Philip Ledger – before he was famous. We joined other choirs on moving from place to place, and I was a founder member of a chamber choir near Blackburn in 1995, singing variously from first soprano to second alto – I love learning a new part to something familiar. I also conducted our church choir for a time. We now both love singing with KSC and with Cumbria Festival Chorus.

Favourite piece: Poulenc, Quatre Motets pour le temps de Noël – particularly Quem vidistis pastores dicite. Poulenc’s harmonies are hard for me to describe but always set up a sense of longing in me – for what, I don’t know. Peculiar, I know!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Krw2mQJ2SJ4>

### **ELIZABETH HOWE**

I would just like to wish all a safe Christmas and New Year.

I started singing at Castle Street Primary School, then Kendal High School. I joined award-winning Greenside Choir when I left school for a while, and was then persuaded by Jim Noble to join Kendal South over 50 years ago. I’ve taken part in many Music Festivals, especially Blackpool. The highlight was 9 of us in Kendal South chosen to sing Lift

Thine Eyes, from Elijah, with The BBC Northern Orchestra, now the BBC Phil. at the Mary Wakefield Festival.

Favourite piece: How lovely are thy dwellings (Brahms German Requiem)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCN44NzEN5M>

### **JOHN LOMAX**

Happy Christmas greetings to all in the Choir! I can share with you all the very latest news, which is that production this year is right down at Santa’s workshop, because many of his workers have had to elf isolate.

I have to confess that I started as an angelic (?) choir boy in cassock, ruff and surplice. Somehow I never quite escaped after that – I have been in Church choirs wherever we’ve lived and also in School Staff Choirs at each of my teaching posts. Then, living in this choral-rich area of the country I’ve been fortunate – especially since retirement – to sing with a number of local choral groups. 2020 has been such a bare year in this regard – I, together with so many others, hope that “Normal service will be resumed as soon as possible”!

For a straightforward, short and simple piece I think Mozart’s Ave Verum cannot be bettered.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXjn6srhAIY>

### **ANNE HANDLEY**

My thanks to all those who serve the Choir in whatever capacity, especially our current Committee and of course Geoff Field, our Director, who achieves everything with patience, kindness and fun. Best wishes everyone for 2021, roll on the vaccinations and normality!

I joined Kendal South Choir in 1954 under Jim Noble (the longest singing member – not the oldest!) and the first major Festival piece I sang was Vaughan Williams’ “Toward the

Unknown Region". 66 years under brilliant Choir leaders each with their own differing repertoire. I remember with nostalgia when the Festivals were held in St George's Theatre under the baton of famous guest conductors and soloists. I am so lucky – it is a privilege to sing with Kendal South.

Favourite piece: Anything from "A Night at the Opera" – a brilliant concert. I did think of the Rio Grande by Constant Lambert – having just listened to it again I remember it was a difficult piece to sing and we don't know what our strength will be after COVID.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8aHsJdMEMY>

#### **MARY HARPER**

I send my good wishes to all my Choir friends and do hope we will be able to meet soon.

#### **JOSE BROCK**

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas, missing you all and desperate to get singing again.

One memory never to be forgotten was when in Nottingham 55years ago I joined the Nottingham Harmonic Choir and the front row 1st sopranos, all not too young, guarded their seats with vigour but what's more they always wore their hats for rehearsals. How things have changed! It always makes me smile on recollection, especially as it always made seeing the conductor more difficult. However we did sing some challenging things in spite of our long white dresses!

#### **RUTH WRIGHT**

Wishing all members a very happy Christmas. I've missed singing with you all (especially the altos!) so much this year, Hope we will soon be able to sing together again.

I enjoyed singing in school choirs from a very young age and joined my first "real" choir at the age of 14, where my mum also sang. The first major work I sang was the

Messiah and I still have the copy given to me for that concert. It's now 50 years old and a bit battered but singing in groups from small ensembles to large choral societies has been my joy and happy place ever since.

Favourite piece: Vivaldi's Gloria, Mascagni's Easter Hymn, Sanctus or Benedictus from the Armed Man by Karl Jenkins.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZvxUHuiD8s>

#### **FIONA STEVENS**

1) Mendelssohn, The German Liturgy. Two movements, Kyrie in A and Sanctus (Heilig, heilig, heilig). Available on cpdl web site

2) Rheinberger Abendlied: Bleib bei uns – in Rutter's European Sacred Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqzRWGhgGul>

#### **MARGARET HARRIMAN**

Happy Christmas to everyone in South Choir and hope you are all well and been able to reflect and occupy yourselves during these strange times of lockdown and restrictions.

I was introduced to choral singing in my late teens by an elderly lady I used to visit and where I met and married my late husband also a member of the same choir.

Unfortunately there was a long gap from singing until I joined the congregational choir of KPC with Hugh Davies DofM. Hugh kindly welcomed me into South Choir to sing the Messiah and that was the rebirth of my choral singing.

One of my favourite songs is Wonderful World because as a keen walker I have learned to appreciate the beauty of my surroundings. I also love The Heavens are Telling from Haydn's Creation.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBrd\\_3VMC3c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBrd_3VMC3c)

#### **STEWART FULLER**

To all members of Kendal South Choir I send my very best wishes for a Happy Christmas

and for a New Year that hopefully may see some return to normal life and to singing.

I started singing aged eight. The local church choirmaster came to my school seeking boys to join the choir. I enjoyed the first practice so joined and have been singing ever since. I even managed to do some singing during my Naval service, when in Trinidad I joined the local church choir.

Back home again I re-joined the church choir. An office colleague conducted the West Borough Singers and invited me to join. He also ran a church choir and I went with them to Canterbury Cathedral which was full of RSCM choirs from all over Kent. It was a very fulfilling day.

With the Coventry Philharmonic Choir I sang my first major work – Verdi's Requiem. At church I was asked to run a small choir of children at a daughter church on a new estate. That was very interesting. The young man who played the harmonium also sang bass. I managed to get a few girls to sing alto so we were often able to sing in four parts.

In Romford I joined the Music and Arts choir. Heard singing in the church congregation I was invited to join the choir, then The Wykeham singers and then the Upminster Bach Choir. This proved too much so I gave up the Music and Arts choir and the church choir (furthest away). The Wykeham Singers was a small group (rehearsals were held in the conductor's front room) but still sang all sorts of pieces from madrigals to Brahms Requiem. With them I sang in several quartets and a trio.

Singing with them brought an invitation to sing tenor solo in Olivet to Calvary in the local church. We twice entered the BBC choir of the year competition, once coming in the top three so we were broadcast. It was a great experience recording our piece at Broadcasting House. I also enjoyed singing at holiday camp concerts both solo and duets.

Moving to Grasmere in 1984 I was told that Kendal South was the best choir to join, Jim Noble conducting. And the rest as they say is history.

A favourite piece is Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, because it was sung by the whole school (450/500 boys) with the school orchestra. All boys were split into voice parts form by form and rehearsed. The introduction and parts between verses was played beautifully on the oboe by a form mate of mine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doJ2Fd6JRpQ>

### **CATHY WINTER**

I hope everyone is safe and well and managing to navigate sanely through these difficult times.

We've managed a 'different year' adapting creatively to the various stages of restriction. I've become adept at Zoom, Skype and Facetime, we even had a whisky tasting party via zoom! Imagine nobody had to drive home! We've had coffee, afternoon tea and 'pre-prandials' in much the same way to keep in touch with friends and family at home and abroad. We've almost mastered the smokeless firepit for outside hospitality and we're very glad that we purchased a new large outside garden table that can be wiped down a couple of years ago. When we've been allowed to have family to stay, they've been waited on hand and foot after having observed the one-way route to the dining table and sitting only in their allotted seats! Our hand sanitising and infection control on entry to the house is a well-oiled procedure! We'll have an unusually quiet Christmas preceded by some doorstep-only present delivering ... which will be quite an adventure compared to the quiet life in Selside. We have much for which to be thankful and with that in mind I wish everyone the best possible festive season you can manage.

I grew up with music in the house, joined the choir in primary school, joined the church

choir as a teenager and sang in the school choirs. I met my husband through singing (remember Robert Redford in The Way We Were? It was a bit like that!) and since being married in 1976 I've belonged to a choral society of some kind or other.

Favourite piece? Can't decide! Anything not too technical, nothing that will make me cry, and something everyone else will enjoy.

#### **DUNCAN HAMER**

Good wishes for Christmas and the New Year – missing singing and the company. Hopefully we will be back Easter time 2021.

My Grandmother and my Father sang a lot when I was in my teens and my Father sang with the Rossendale Male Voice Choir for many years. When I gave up full-time employment I didn't want to end up like some of my friends – in the pub every night. That's when I decided to take up singing. The Choir has been keeping me physically and mentally fit with body exercises, breathing correctly and concentration. All very good for well being.

I love Toward the Unknown Region by Vaughan Williams but needs an orchestra! [Not necessarily! JR]  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qs1eY5xfwPY>

#### **MARGARET SAUNDERS**

I hope all choir members will have a happy and safe Christmas despite the restrictions and that we will all meet again “some sunny day” and it could well be early Summer!!

I have had a short think about my singing career. Too many years ago – but started singing when three or four years old – I used to pick up songs on the radio – “keep the home fires burning” was the first song I sang from memory. That gives my age away! As you will know all music taught at primary school was without paper copies and had to be learned by heart. Also learned to sight

read which was an excellent discipline, and many years ago KSC used to win the sight reading classes at the festival. Of course we had the amazing Margaret Hine for our teacher throughout primary and secondary school years who also taught me piano and violin and how to conduct. I conducted Castle Street primary school percussion band at age 8ish, and have the photo to prove it!! Later the string orchestra at the same school at a festival held that year in Sedbergh School due to the war.

A favourite piece is “O Radiant Dawn” by James MacMillan. Wonderful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8MILVwN2ss>

#### **HEATHER CARRICK**

Keep well; stay safe and enjoy Christmas however different it may be this year. Howard and I are fine but really looking forward to a time when we can all start to do things together again. Wishing you all the very best for 2021.

I have sung most of my life – always amateur and for pleasure. Started in a madrigal group at university; sang in a ladies choir while I was working in Darlington (approx. 20 years); joined another ladies choir (Regent Singers) when I moved to Kendal (2004); joined Kendal South when Regent Singers finished. I have also sung with CCI [now Cumbria Festival Chorus] for a number of performances.

#### **WENDY CORRIE**

Hope you all manage to celebrate the Christmas season with loved ones. I have really missed singing and meeting on Tuesday nights. I still don't know where Mary went on her mystery tour back in March or even if she went at all. 2021 has to be an improvement on 2020, so Happy New Year in advance, and look forward to seeing you all then.

When I was at Primary School I attended Sunday School and every year we had an anniversary which meant lots of singing. I

always enjoyed it and the choir master picked out my friend and I to try some harmonies. I was hooked. We were then headhunted for the church choir, singing alto of course. I carried on singing, joining the choir at college, later the local choral society, a spell with an amateur Opera company, then a smaller choir before moving to South Lakes. I love all kinds of music (except possibly jazz) but especially big choral works, a lot of church music, opera choruses and even G and S. Not singing during lockdown has made me realise how important music, and singing in particular, are to my health and wellbeing.

I'd love some Bruckner because it's beautiful and I haven't sung any for a while. From ESM: Ave Maria, Christus factus est or Locus iste.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQRYwe4KDDQ>

#### **JENNIE BURKE**

I would certainly like to wish all the choir a very Merry Christmas and joyful hopes for the New Year that we all get vaccinated and can start singing together again before too long — I miss it.

I started choral singing about 20 years ago when my son's school choir did Carmina Burana and wanting a parents' choir. I enjoyed it so much that I sang with the Watford Philharmonic choir for 10 years before we moved up here and then joined Kendal South as an alto — still loving it!

My favourite Xmas carol is — In the Bleak Midwinter — and a verse of that would be wonderful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFca8sTbbkg>

#### **KATE HORE**

I'd like to wish a Merry Christmas and a Safe & Happy New Year to you all. You've all made me very welcome since joining the choir last year. It's great to have found such a nice bunch to be part of, and I can't wait to get

back singing with you all just as soon as we can. Love, Kate

My mum and sister were both in the church choir and I recall pestering the vicar for, probably, a couple of years to let me join. He finally relented when I was nine. Through school and beyond I was always in a choir, starting my alto journey quite young, aged around twelve or thirteen. I love being an alto, as I find it much more challenging and rewarding than singing the tune, but I do still like to belt out a melody occasionally, and usually attempt the descant to Hark the Herald at least once each Christmas! I've been lucky enough to sing in some amazing venues, including Birmingham's ICC and the Royal Albert Hall, but it's the camaraderie of fellow singers, and the magic of harmony that I really enjoy, and that can happen anywhere. When we moved to Kendal, I was so pleased to meet Mary who introduced me to KSC, and I am loving singing with you all.

My favourite piece of music is "Sunrise, Sunset" from Fiddler on the Roof. It reminds me of growing up surrounded by music and drama. Fiddler was the first show I was ever in, and I shared the role of 'Bielke', the youngest daughter, with another girl as we were both too young to appear every night. My mum played the ghostly Grandma Tzeitel (so my great-grandmother!), my eldest sister was Hodel, my dad a Russian soldier and my middle sister danced — including the famous Cossack Bottle Dance, of which she was justly proud!

More recently we chose the piece for the intro music at Dad's funeral, and the lyrics seem just as suited to that as to its original purpose at a wedding. Therefore, it has bittersweet memories for me, and is quite likely to raise a tear in rehearsals, but I have always found that I am most in control when I'm actually singing, so I should be alright on the night!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLLEBAQLZ3Q>