

MUSIC AT CHRIST CHURCH

The music for the Liturgy at Christ Church has flourished during the year, led ably by the Church Choir and the Worship Group. With Coffee Concerts, visits from outside groups, schools and our own music for the services, Christ Church continued to be musically vibrant.

It is always fun to have a day out and in early October the choir went to sing Evensong in Coventry Cathedral. Once again Matthew Martin accompanied us on the organ which is a fine instrument. Matthew will soon be changing jobs and is moving from Keble College Oxford to take up the post of Director of Music at Gonville and Caius College Cambridge. We wish him every success.

The Choir's Coffee Concert was held again in October and followed the theme of 'Praise' in church music. It was a pleasure to welcome Dr. David Ponsford back to Christ Church who played the organ accompaniments for us and an organ solo.

The choir has led many services through the year which have included The Act of Remembrance in November, when we had a live trumpeter to play the Last Post. Also, the Memorial Service, Carols by Candlelight and the combined Epiphany Carol Service held with Cheltenham Ladies College (CLC). Currently, the choir is rehearsing the Oratorio 'Crucifixion', music by Sir John Stainer to be performed on Palm Sunday evening. He wrote it for the choir of Marylebone Church where it was first performed in February 1887.

A number of local church choirs met at Christ Church to rehearse a piece by Adrian Self called St. Cuthbert. Adrian Self is a former organist of All Saints in Cheltenham. The RSCM event was run by Fiona Brown, who teaches organ at CLC, and the conductor was Jonathan Hope, Assistant Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral. The piece itself is for choir, piano, organ and percussion and great fun to perform. Unfortunately, because of the Corona Virus, the performance has now been postponed until March 2021.

Cheltenham Choral Society is now using Christ Church as a venue and we are welcoming them in the summer to perform Bach's St. John Passion. They are returning in November to perform Handel's Messiah.

The organ is sounding good at the moment thanks to our Organ Tuner who tuned through most of the instrument in December. As the temperature is cool and steady around the organ, it has generally kept fairly well in tune. He did some necessary maintenance inside the instrument to make a couple of the stops work properly every time which proved essential. The low voltage electrics in the organ could do with updating before they become unreliable. Unfortunately, renewing all the electrics is a major undertaking and not cheap. We need to keep in mind that updating maybe necessary within the next few years.

Finally, I would like to thank Beck Donaldson for her tireless work with the Worship Group and the regular members who have supported the choir on a weekly basis, making it possible to maintain such a variety and high standard of music.

Tim Ingold