

Car Park petition handed in to College

A petition calling for HoW college to consider providing a cashless pay-on-foot machine for their car park next to Artrix has been handed in to the college.

Representatives from Bromsgrove Arts Alive met with the college Vice-Principal and Chair of Governors and presented the petition, signed by 1468 people.

In response, the college offered the opportunity for the community to purchase a machine to enable car park users to pay on foot. This would cost £4500 plus an annual maintenance charge of around £2000.

A spokesperson for BAA said 'A number of daytime visitors to Artrix, particularly those without smartphones and ready access to the internet, have said they would welcome this means of paying as an alternative to having to phone, use the app. or register online. Despite the obvious community benefit of an on-site payment machine, the costs quoted by the college are well beyond the budget of Bromsgrove Arts organisations. It is proving difficult to find a way forward with this, but Bromsgrove Arts Alive continues to seek a viable solution.'

BDC Arts offers Digital Opportunities from your own home

Though COVID-19 means we aren't able to go out to things right now, it's been heartening to see the emergence of so many brilliant digital arts ventures bringing people together virtually in the past few weeks.

Via our own channels and online presence, we want to support and showcase some of the great things people in Bromsgrove are doing to stay active and creative.



There are a few ways people can let us know about what they're up to on Twitter– via the #CreativeBromsgrove and #ActiveBromsgrove hashtags (with the active tag relating to physical/sports activity).

Or if people want to they can send things directly to me at 'stewart.sanderson@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk'.

We're keen to see all kinds of creative contributions – written reflections, images of artwork, videos of musical performances or readings. We want to see what people are doing, get ideas and share these with as wide an audience as possible to make sure that the current situation doesn't get in the way of our coming together around creative activity.

£300 grants

Worcestershire County Council and Severn Arts are inviting local artists and arts organisations to apply for a grant of £300 per artist/organisation to create a piece of work that can be shared and enjoyed digitally – find out more at #CreativeConnections.

Thanks to our members who have sent in items for the Spring Newsletter. This is an interim edition (not for print) which will be revised and re-issued (probably in June) when we will know if any events are able to take place over the Summer

Ann Cleeves at Words

WORDS has been bringing the best of the Written and Spoken Word to Bromsgrove over forty years, and its first event of its 2020 season was to host, on February 28th at Artrix, **Ann Cleeves**, the author of the books of the popular television series *Shetland* and *Vera*.



Packed Audience

Ann, who in the 80's had lived in Wychbold, and whose daughter was born in Bromsgrove Hospital, told the packed audience that she had written for many years before finding success. By sheer chance, a television producer, who was looking for an unsterotypical woman detective, picked up a copy of a 'Vera' book in a second hand book shop and thus the very successful television series was born.

Ann said that the character was based on strong single women - teachers, matrons et al - whom she had known in the 1950's when she was growing up and that she never knows who the murderer is until nearly the end of the book !!!!

Book Signing

Before and after the event Ann chatted to the audience and **signed**

copies of her new book, 'The Long Call', based in Devon, which is now top of the Sunday Times Paperback Best Sellers List and which has been optioned to be made into a television series. During the afternoon Ann had visited The Wendron Day Centre for the Disabled in Bromsgrove, as the book features a similar Community Centre.

Disappointingly, but inevitably, WORDS next event in April - "From Script to Screen" - featuring Peter Lloyd, the Series Producer of the long running and award winning BBC TV Series *Doctors*, had to be cancelled because of the Coronavirus Pandemic, but we are hoping to reschedule it later in the year. Thus, virus permitting, our next event now will be as part of The Bromsgrove Festival, when we will welcome Pat Murphy, the well known BBC Sports Journalist and Presenter, and Author of over 40 books, to Bromsgrove Rugby Club on **Wednesday, June 24th**, starting at 7.30.p.m. Tickets will be available via the WORDS website – www.bromsgrovewords.com in the near future. If you would like to be a WORDS Supporter and be kept up to date with its activities, please email Nick Taylor - nhtaylor44@gmail.com

Rubery Drama Group Steps Out at last

Our production in October 2019 was the much delayed *Stepping Out* by Richard Harris.

This production had a wonderful set of characters to bring the action alive from beginning to end. The whole group had to learn to tap dance and what an impression they gave as we followed their efforts from not being able to dance at the beginning of the play to a full size finale at the close. The piece was brilliantly directed by Jayne Jones and Nicky Smith.

Our production that was due to take place near the end of April this year was to have been *Don't Dress for Dinner* by Marc Camoletti. We now await details of when the play can take place, hopefully in October. Look out for details on Rubery Drama Group Facebook page.

Cake and Coffee concert

It was a real family Affair at the February Cake and Coffee concert at St John's Church. Baritone Dave Coulson was teamed up with daughter Marion and Son in law Tom Martin to present a wonderful programme entitled 'Family Matters'



The Bromsgrove 40th anniversary Competition postponed – but Bromsgrove Young Musicians Platform planned for October

The Bromsgrove 2020 Competition - our 40th Anniversary - sadly is one of the casualties of Covid-19.

We had all been looking forward to a marvellous celebratory competition. The decision to postpone until next year was made by the Trustees pro-actively early with the safety of both our major partners, Bromsgrove School and all the citizens of Bromsgrove town particularly in mind amongst many factors.

So that is the bad news. The positive and cheering news is that the **Bromsgrove Young Musicians Platform**, now in its fifth year opened nationally for competitors. The auditions were fortunately completed successfully in February.

The competitors were of super-high talent giving the Adjudicators a really hard task to pick the finalists. The Finalists Concert will now take place on **Sunday afternoon 25th October 2020**.

Competitors chosen for 2021

The Bromsgrove International Musicians Competition will take place as usual starting on Tuesday 5th April 2021 with the finalists concert on **Saturday 10th April 2021**. Fifty amazing competitors have already been chosen from the applicants this year and will be allowed to compete next year without further

ado so be assured that we already have a marvellous competition for our new prestigious gold medal is waiting for you.



Amy Dickson cannot transpose her appearance to 10th April next year. So we have decided to celebrate our 40th Anniversary by inviting her to top the bill to play the world premiere piece composed by Chris Rogerson already in rehearsal.

She will be joined by international star names from other past Winners for a musical spectacular at the Routh Hall in late Autumn 2020. Assuming we can bring that to fruition within any subsisting restrictions, tickets will be on sale as soon as final arrangements can be made. So please do watch out for those sales on our website at www.bromsgrove

[competition.com](http://www.bromsgrove.com) Money raised from this concert will go towards the continuance of The Bromsgrove. Meanwhile, may I re-iterate our thanks to you to those in Bromsgrove who have taken part in bringing the BIMC to its present worldwide status in the music world. We will come through this pandemic intact. Listening to the music of our cultural heritage will help keep us positive in completing that journey.

Ian Morris

Bromsgrove Festival update

As many (not all) of the events which were to make up this year's festival have been, or were likely to be, cancelled, the Festival committee decided not to have a printed brochure this year.

The web site, however, is still up and running and details of surviving events will be on there shortly including any alterations, updates, etc.,

Bromsgrove Festival lives on albeit with a reduced presence this year. Go to www.bromsgrovethefestival.co.uk or follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@BromsgroveFest)

We are already looking forward to 2021 when, it is to be hoped, that the celebration of all that is Bromsgrove will be bigger and better

The Midland Sinfonia

The Midland Sinfonia is a professional chamber orchestra based at St Laurence Church, Alvechurch, whose concert season includes chamber music classics, as well as hosting jazz and folk ensembles, and promoting younger players by presenting an annual Young Musicians' Showcase.

Our emphasis is obviously on smaller-scale music - often unfairly regarded as the 'poor relation' of the great composers whose symphonies, concertos, oratorios and so on are heard in the big concert halls and cathedrals, and attract the largest audiences. Take Dvořák: his *New World Symphony* and *Cello Concerto* may be crowd-pullers - and deservedly so - yet his delectable *Serenade for Strings Op 22*, the centrepiece of our November concert, lacks nothing in terms of musical craftsmanship, expressive beauty and sheer tunefulness. (Another of his great chamber works, the so-called 'American' String Quartet, is scheduled to be played in our Summer Concert.)

For the December concert, and by way of variety, we set the strings to one side and let the brass take over - not that brass players need much incentive! **Holborne Brass** certainly knew how to entertain an audience: their slick, good-humoured "cocktail of seasonal delights" included Christmas songs and carols, jazz standards and classical favourites by Vivaldi and Saint-Saens.

And so to **An Audience With Craig Ogden**, the Australian-born virtuoso guitarist whose recital at



St Laurence Church on March 7th was a truly memorable experience. Not only an accomplished guitarist (as we all know from his recordings heard almost daily on Classic FM), he is also a fine raconteur, punctuating his musical offerings (the modern pieces by George Harrison and Gary Ryan being particularly well received) with anecdotes which included the pitfalls of protecting his playing hands. Sporting a broken ankle in no way inhibited his performance, whereas you sensed that damaging a fingernail

on his plucking hand would have been a true calamity! Decisions have yet to be made regarding *The Young Musicians' Showcase* event (scheduled for 28th June) and the "Independence Day" concert (July 4th) featuring music by Barber, Gershwin., Copland, Milhaud and Dvořák - his *American Quartet* mentioned earlier. Visit our website midlandsinfonia@gmail.com for the latest developments.

Avoncroft Folk Dance Group

We are a traditional folk dance group that enjoys everything from barn dances to the more formal ones that you might see in *Pride and Prejudice* or *Poldark*.

The club has been going for over 70 years and is a great way to meet people, make friends and get some gentle exercise.



Novices and experienced dancers are welcome, all dances are walked through first with the instructions given by a caller. We now offer any club an hour long entertainment which includes an illustrated talk on English Folk Dance, a short demonstration and a couple of dances for audience participation (space permitting).

If you are interested in booking us, drop us an email.

If you'd like to join us we meet at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, B60 4JR on Thursday evenings 8-10pm
More information – Liz Stanton
liz@the-stantons.uk

Dancing is good for you!! It keeps the body and mind active...and it's fun!

Reminiscences of South Birmingham Guild of Silk Painters

The Guild of Silk Painters Journal recently celebrated their 100 edition and asked branches to send in reminiscences of their branch.

Beginnings

It can be seen from the Autumn 1997 Guild magazine that the now late Pat Connelly reported she planned to hire a room locally in which to hold branch meetings, having previously met with a small group in her own home in Rubery and to name the group the South Birmingham Branch. She envisaged that there would initially be about eight or ten members. I (Kay Morris) joined around then and found a very busy friendly group. Before long the numbers in the group had risen to about twenty and we regularly set up exhibitions in local libraries and had sales tables at local events.

Gardens of England

In May 2002 our group hosted the Guild's summer show, Gardens of England, at Avoncroft Museum in Bromsgrove where the New Guesten Hall with its marvellous mediaeval roof proved to be a wonderful setting for the

occasion and showed off nearly a hundred entries for the competition beautifully (not to mention the wonderful topics and tutors arranged for the event).

In 2009 we were pleased to join with the Staffordshire and Shropshire branch to host the *Silk Art to Wear* Festival, held



at Rodbaston near Penkridge. We all enjoyed creating painted squares which were to form our branch kimono and were very grateful to Mary Day and Rachel Castle who made up the finished garment.

Winning picture

In 2015 our group submitted a painting for the Branch Challenge competition to include a musical element. We were delighted to win with our Yellow Symphony picture depicting many different song titles which included the word 'yellow'. It had been lots of fun to create and indeed accompany it with a

recording of all the songs.

Guest tutors

Over the years we also enjoyed various 'fun days' when we had guest tutors from the Guild inspiring us with their ideas. Looking back through the Guild magazines, brings back many happy memories for us and reminds us of the varied topics and techniques we have covered over the years.

We have been pleased to support the Staffordshire branch at the Guild stands at various NEC exhibitions and indeed have recruited members to our branch from there.

It must be mentioned that the support, guidance and expertise of Lin Fuller and Mary Day is much appreciated and we thank them very much."

Our branch has been pleased to have a display in Rubery Library as part of Enjoy Rubery within the time of the Bromsgrove Festival. As we speak, we still hope to do that in spite of not being able to meet at the moment. It will be a challenge to start up our meetings again once the virus pandemic is past, but we certainly hope to do so and will welcome new people along to our newly timed meeting of 10.30 am of the third Wednesday of the month at the Beacon Church Centre, Whetty Lane Rubery, B45 9DL.

‘Tell Me What You Want’ Project Completed

The project commissioned by the Bromsgrove Arts and Culture Consortium was completed early in the New Year with the publication of a final report and action plan. This final report and an executive summary are available on the Bromsgrove Arts Alive website

The Consortium, made up of Artrix, Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove Arts Alive, Bromsgrove Festival, Bromsgrove International Musicians Competition, Severn Arts, and Worcester Arts Partnership and convened by Bromsgrove District Council, undertook the 18 month project with the aim of seeking routes to:-

- Widen participation in arts culture and heritage in Bromsgrove District
- Elevate the wellbeing of the residents of Bromsgrove District, and
- Strengthen the communities of Bromsgrove District

Working with a research partner, the Beatbreaks Collective, the project was undertaken in three phases with a final celebratory arts event that took place during the Christmas lights switch on in November last year.

The first phase involved conversations with a large number of members of the public and organisations throughout Bromsgrove and asked –

- What do the people of Bromsgrove District want from arts, culture and heritage, and
- What barriers to engagement exist, and how can these be addressed.

In summary, the people and organisations of Bromsgrove responded that: ‘We want space, we want connection, we want participation to be easy and we want our voices to be heard’.

The first phase also identified four key groups of people that were under engaged in arts, culture and heritage in Bromsgrove and they were:-

- 1. Young people aged 15-20 years**
- 2. Isolated elderly people**
- 3. Lower socio economic groups**
- 4. Parents with older children**

The second phase of the project, carried out in the first half of last year, focussed on collaboration with these four groups through a series of action research activities that were deliberately held in non-traditional spaces outside the town centre.

This identified a further number of key barriers that need to be addressed, such as high travel costs and the need to keep things local, the lack of affordable local spaces for arts activities and where existing definitions of culture are excluding people from participating. These findings and conclusions can be found in the Phase 2 project report that can also be found on the BAA website.

The findings and conclusions from the first two phases were then drawn together in the final project report with an action plan and routes to address the key goals identified:-

- 1. Making connections – building a more connected Bromsgrove district through celebrating Bromsgrove’s creativity and history.**
- 2. Making Space – bringing arts, culture and heritage activity to local and everyday spaces.**
- 3. Making participation easy – working in partnership to widen participation in arts culture and heritage.**
- 4. Making our voices heard – diversifying governance and building a more flexible, dynamic and resilient cultural sector in Bromsgrove District.**

The action plan proposes that the work to achieve these goals be carried forward through a number of projects (which may need external funding), such as the creation of a Heritage Corridor and BAA’s current initiative to create a register of available spaces in Bromsgrove for arts and cultural activities, as well as working with partner organisations, e.g. Age Concern, to access under engaged groups.

To do this it will be necessary to create a more formal organisation, with fund holding and grant awarding capability, in order to effectively co-ordinate the various projects and initiatives. This body should have widespread engagement with the arts and heritage sectors in Bromsgrove.

Preliminary discussions have established that it is clear that Bromsgrove Arts Alive has the opportunity to play an important role in delivering the action plan and that it is important that there is no duplication of effort in working to achieve the goals. It is planned to bring proposals for BAA’s future involvement to the next meeting.

Graham Mackenzie (Chair, Bromsgrove Arts and Culture Consortium)

Exciting Summer Concerts for Festive Classics

Festive Classics is hoping to stage four concerts this Summer. All will be held at the Gusten Hall at Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings, as in previous years. **All the concerts will be at 12 noon, followed by lunch (if ordered 7 days in advance) at 1.00pm.**

Wednesday 24 June - 'Quirkish Delight' - Actor/singer and pianist Michael Lunts.

Returning for his sixth time - always to full audiences - Michael serves up for your delectation a confection of deliciously witty comedy songs. The entertainment is timeless, quintessential musical cabaret, drawing on the very finest comedy songs in the English language, from both sides of the Atlantic, from Tom Lehrer to Noël Coward, Cole Porter to Flanders and Swann. To mark VE Day, Michael will include some of the comedy songs made famous by ENSA, the wartime entertainment troupe, who spent the war 'fighting for a laugh', while keeping up the spirits of a country fighting for its survival.

Wednesday 1 July - 'Hush!' - Papagena

Festive Classics is privileged to be able to present the five world-class, stunning voices of Papagena. They have been live on BBC Radio 3 and guests on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour. They have performed to full audiences across the country and at The Three Choirs Festival in 2019. These five voices deserve a full audience again at Festive Classics, as they had such rapturous appreciation on the last two occasions. Even if you think this is not quite your style of music, you cannot avoid being in awe of the flawless perfection of their sound - without props, microphones, fuss or gimmicks.



Wednesday 8 July - 'Mozart's Gran Partita' - The Orchestra of St John Chamber Ensemble

Mozart's Serenade No. 10 for winds in B_♭ major, K.361/370a is popularly known as the Gran Partita.

This wonderful serenade in seven movements has been called Mozart's most innovative instrumental work. It shows off an astonishing variety of tones and textures for its 13 players, contrasting styles against each other and constantly changing the musical effects in this largest of all the composers wind masterpieces. It is no wonder that this is a favourite of Mozart enthusiasts, and is often performed with a contrabassoon instead of a double bass - as will happen on this occasion. The concert will even include the wind version of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* Overture, as an extra indulgence.

Wednesday 15 July - 'A Touch of Brass' - Holborne Brass Ensemble

Members of this well-known Midlands brass group have performed with many notable orchestras such as the English Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Symphony Orchestra, the CBSO and other ensembles such as the Black Dyke, Foden's and Desford brass bands. Within just a few years of being formed - in 1985 - the ensemble was a finalist in the prestigious Royal Overseas League Competition for young professionals in London. Although classically-trained musicians, they play in a range of musical genres, including orchestral, theatre, brass band, big band and jazz. The group maintains its eclectic approach to performance and, whilst the music content of their performances is of the highest standard, the humorous aspect is never far away. They will be presenting a high-quality and entertaining programme in their own, inimitable style.

Details of tickets for all the concerts (and lunches) are available on the website:

www.festiveclassics.co.uk

Around and about with artist Christine Harmer

It already seems a long time ago (and in another world) that I was attending craft shows and markets last autumn.

The events I was hoping to take part in, the mainstay of my craft business have been cancelled.

My first and only fair of 2020 so far was in Malvern a few weeks before the 'lock down'. In Worcestershire there were, I believe only two known cases of COVID-19 at the time and the situation was very different. The many professional craftspeople showing their work knew it would be our last chance to be face to face with the public for quite a while. We were extremely grateful to the venue organiser/owner for proceeding with the event and for her understanding of the potential effects of the current crisis on our incomes. Thanks also, to the visitors who supported us by attending. The effects of austerity have been hard on the creative industries financially. I for one was hoping that we were on the cusp of better times, as public confidence in spending seemed to be on the rise, especially when it comes to the present enthusiasm for 'experiences'. My workshop sessions have increased in popularity, and I had a busy month in February teaching my craft.

In mid November I exhibited at Stratford-upon Avon Town Hall, my first time there and a successful day. The next day, I also had a good show at the recently built Cofton Village Hall. People flocked to see the display in this lovely new building.

Commissioned event

The following Friday and Saturday, saw the Bromsgrove Christmas Markets in town. I was especially busy on the Saturday, as I was showing work in two places. In addition to having a stall at

the market, I presented the result of several months' effort at the opposite end of the town. Worcester Road hosted the Celebration Event at which myself and the other commissioned artists presented their work to coincide with the annual Christmas Lights 'Switch-on'.

Random Orbit

I had been chosen by Bromsgrove Arts & Culture Consortium and Beatfrecks Collective to bring my proposal to life. This was my first large-scale work. The commission was a response to one of the provocations, which were elicited from the local populace as part of the 'Tell Me What You Want' Project. Several reasons were



given by residents to explain why they felt excluded from the arts. I responded to the statement 'I'm not creative' making an artwork named 'Random Orbit' that was both interactive and intended to provoke discussion. The idea behind the piece was that everyone has the potential for creativity within them. Being faced with a blank sheet of paper can be very daunting and unlikely to stimulate the necessary juices. I aimed to make available some elements such as shapes, patterns and colours, so anyone could have the satisfaction of creating their own unique picture. There are

various sizes of decorated, and plain black magnetic discs (many with pewter dots) on the framed stainless steel board. The circles can be rearranged either by one person, or a group of people, until they reach a design that they find attractive. Similarly to my jewellery, the discs are decorated with kiln-fired enamelled copper designs (enamelling is the craft of fusing powdered glass to metal at high temperature).

Misrepresentation

In December, I travelled to Ralph Court Gardens, near Bromyard. If ever a show was mis-sold it was this one. I and the other participants had booked stalls, having little knowledge of the venue. We were influenced by an image of a rather impressive, light-filled marquee which the organisers used to advertise the craft fair online. The reality was truly disappointing. At least one exhibitor pointed out that this misrepresentation by using the image of a marquee in Italy was fraudulent. The organisers sadly felt that giving a more accurate idea of the facilities would have reduced table bookings and visitor numbers. It was a poor event, anyway, and I feel it illustrates the difficulties of choosing events to attend and how the failure of some has a considerable impact on the financial viability of craft businesses.

For more information on my designs or about learning the craft of enamelling please visit www.enamelledjewellery.co.uk. Or find me on facebook

Step on Board

We had thoroughly enjoyed our Winter Wassail dance outs at Frankley and The Lickey Hills and most of all at Brandon Marsh Nature Centre near Coventry where we joined a number of other dance sides of different traditional styles for several hours of dancing and making music followed by a most enjoyable buffet lunch and catch up after the Winter break. Before we ceased our regular Monday night rehearsals, we picked a couple of new tunes to dance to and had basically choreographed them so that they would be ready for our summer festival and fete dance outs. All of our dancers have taken the “instructions” for the new dances home with them and it is to be hoped that when we get back together, we can pick them up again fairly easily. It will also give them an opportunity to exercise during “lock down”



Unfortunately, much of our summer festival and fete dance outs have already been cancelled but one or two still remain and it is to be hoped that they survive so that we can do what we love doing most... entertaining the public.

If you would like more information regarding what we do, and what Appalachian style dancing is all about don't hesitate to give Cynthia a call on 07828 716842 or get in touch at bobcynfolk@aol.com. We also have a Facebook page - just enter Step on Board Appalachian Dance Team in the search box. We are hoping, during this lay off to put up more photographs and videos of our exploits. We're always looking for new members including both dancers and musicians... for the former, no real experience is necessary and for the latter, if you can readily pick up a tune or accompany others with three or four basic chords, we'd love to hear from you...call Cynthia!

A Poem a day...

Kate Shaw, from 'Words' is offering BAA members the chance to be sent a Daily Poem – some have already been sent and if you are interested in catching up with them and/or registering with Kate to receive one, drop her an email – kate@shaw-line.com. An Offering is the first poem in Stewart Sanderson's collection of this name. He has come down from Scotland to work as an Arts Officer for Bromsgrove and Redditch Council.

Housman Society

The Society's traditional *Name and Nature of Poetry* Lecture which always used to be held during the Hay Festival has now been transferred to Evesham where Peter Parker, author of the acclaimed *Housman Country*, will talk on “Bredon and Other Hills” on 27th June.

The Society's Summer event takes in a visit to Lyme Regis where A.E.H.'s father, who was Vicar of Catshill, lived. Julian Hunt will give a talk in the afternoon, which will be preceded by Linda Hart and Max Hunt reading a selection of poems about the sea in the morning. No doubt admirers of Jane Austen will want to visit the museum and strolling along the Cob.

An Offering

by Stewart Sanderson

Understand reader
That what I offer you now
Is not a poem

But certain changes
Which a human voice might ring
Upon the silence

As it ebbs and flows
Around these words like water
Polishing a stone

Or lozenge of glass
Until its keenness softens
To a blunt shimmer-

A faint resonance
Fading out under the weight
Of muffled fathoms.

Folk Club rebooks artists for 2021

Having been right royally entertained by a number of excellent UK artists during the first few weeks of 2020, we were looking forward to the company of Dan McKinnon, a fine Canadian singer who tours over here for a couple of months each year. At the outbreak of Coronavirus, the Canadian government issued advice to all its citizens who were abroad to get the next plane home or risk not getting home at all. Accordingly his appearance at the Club was cancelled and we were forced into making some decisions. With an American duo due to be at the club a few weeks later, and the restrictions on social distancing being enforced, we decide to cancel... or at least postpone all of the artists we had booked up to the end of May. As this is being written, it is likely that cancellations/postponements will be extended into the summer. Many guest booking clubs shut down for the summer but we have always remained open as an oasis for those who need their 'folk fix'

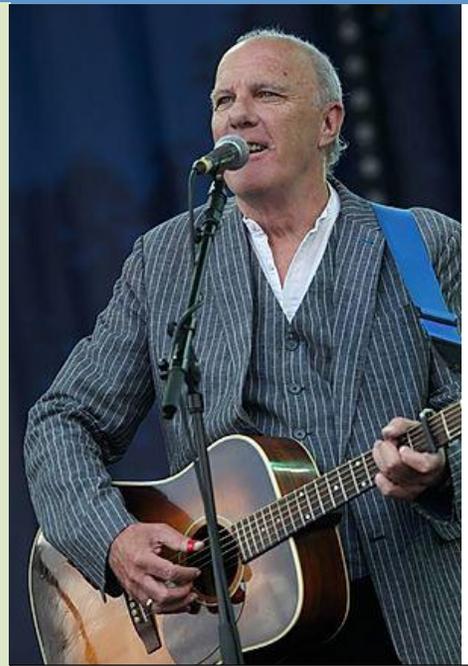
At the same time, we decided to cancel the Folk Festival. Although this isn't until July, we were, during March, being called on, rightly so, to place deposits (non refundable) for such items as marquees, toilets, etc. Added to this, although early ticket sales had been excellent, they had started to dry up as people were unsure about the future. It was with a heavy heart that we found it necessary to contact all of the artists, as well as The Bowling Green at Stoke Prior, our excellent Festival venue, and tell them of our decision. Subsequent decisions made by the government, as the virus has taken a greater hold, indicate that our decision was the correct one if we are to be in a position to guarantee the future of the club and the festival.

We have not abandoned the club or the festival artists affected and many of them have been, or are being, contacted to rearrange their booking for a later date. The Canadian and American acts mentioned previously have already been given bookings for their 2021 tours. The world of the professional musician, precarious at the best of times, is on the brink of collapse and we at Bromsgrove Folk Club and Festival are doing our best, where we can, to alleviate their distress at this time by going on line and spending the money they are saving on artists CDs.

One of the artists who, as we speak, is still booked to play the club is Richard Digance (pictured)

We are hopeful that the present crisis will be over sooner rather than later and we can get back to bringing the best in folk roots and acoustic music back to Bromsgrove.

For more information and to keep up to date with developments go to www.bromsgrovefolkclub.co.uk or visit our Facebook page



Twinning Concert in October

To mark the 40th anniversary of the town twinning with Gronau, a concert is being planned for Saturday October 17th. The Orchestra of St John will accompany the joint choirs of Gronau, Barnt Green Choral Society, Bromsgrove Choral Society and the Gemini Choir.

Some items will be performed together – including Handel's *Zadok the Priest*; the Gronau choir will sing Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and the Bromsgrove choirs will be singing *From the Bavarian Highlands* by Elgar and Haydn's wonderful *insanae et Vanae Curae*.

We're all hoping things will be normal enough for us to rehearse from September for this to go ahead with this very special concert.