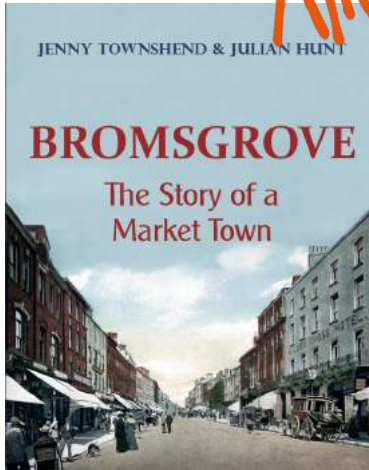


New book on Bromsgrove's history



The Bromsgrove Society are thrilled to announce the launch of their latest publication "Bromsgrove: The Story of a Market Town" which rolled off the printing presses in April 2022.

Written by well-known local historians and Bromsgrove Society members, Jenny Townshend and Julian Hunt, the book chronicles the history of Bromsgrove over the last one thousand years. Based on extensive original research, the authors present an exhaustive account of the town's development, from a medieval settlement to a prosperous market town and industrial centre whose influence extended across the whole of North Worcestershire.

This major new work will appeal to all those who know and love the town, providing an evocative trip down memory lane. Running to 320 pages, the hard backed book is lavishly illustrated with drawings, maps and photographs, many of which have not been published before. Its scholarly and detailed treatment will appeal to local and family historians, as well as students of economic and social history.

The opening chapters look at Bromsgrove's geographical setting and its early evolution. Bromsgrove is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, when it was described as comprising 18 hamlets and the manor belonged to the king. After a charter to hold a market was granted by King John in 1199, Bromsgrove emerged as the principal market town of north Worcestershire. Around this time the church of St John the Baptist was built, standing on a hill overlooking the town.

Early industries and trades, such as tanners, maltsters, clothiers and linen manufacturers, are all described. Nail-making - the district's best-known trade - was first recorded in the 16th century, and by the 19th century exploitative conditions within the nail trade attracted national attention and strikes ensued. Transport links such as roads, canals, and railways have all played a key role in the town's development. Other chapters deal with aspects such as the Poor Law and workhouses, schools and schoolteachers, health and welfare, housing, and the town's rich religious history.



Authors Julian Hunt and Jenny Townshend

The book was officially launched at an event held in Bromsgrove on Saturday 9th April. The publication was financed by advanced subscription and subscribers were invited to collect their copies and meet the authors who were on hand to sign the book. Society Chairman Jo Slade said "The authors, with research assistance from Pat Tansell and typesetting from Mike Sharpe have worked diligently to produce this book. The pandemic stalled the process as access to research materials wasn't available, but the finished book is certainly worth the wait!"

Bromsgrove's getting ready to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee

The extended bank holiday weekend runs from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June, and we are looking forward to all the celebrations! On the evening of Thursday 2nd there will be songs from the bandstand and a beacon will be lit in Sanders Park. Our friends at the Bromsgrove Festival and Bromsgrove Indie Club are making plans for events on Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th and the Bromsgrove branch of the Royal British Legion will be hosting a street party on Sunday 5th June.

The Street Party will see the High Street come to life with entertainment and performers for this free event. Local bands and singers will play music from the decades of Queen Elizabeth II's reign during the day. The Orchestra of St John will provide music from the movies and the last night of the proms with a light show in the evening. Residents are encouraged to bring chairs and a picnic.

Completely Bromsgrove wishes the organisers all the best with their plans and look forward to bringing you the full details in the next edition. If you are organising an event for the Jubilee do let us know by emailing completelybromsgrove@gmail.com

Norton Collection Museum hopes to reopen

Well, it's been a long hard haul, but we're nearly there! The frontage still looks like a bomb site, but there's huge amounts of work going on and large pieces of infrastructure have been constructed and are awaiting installation. We're really hopeful that we will be able to complete the remodelling and reopen this midsummer, providing Disabled Access and a potential Social / Educational space that we didn't have before. Watch out for the Grand Reopening!



Theatretrain Video wins national competition

Theatretrain Bromsgrove runs performing arts classes for children aged 4-18 years and have been doing so for over 16 years.

Originally our home was Artrix however over the last couple of years we have been working with the children over Zoom (during lockdown) and we are now running classes in a local Bromsgrove nightclub.

Here is a link to a two minute video which we entered for a national film competition and won. The theme was "change" and the piece addresses not only the closing of Artrix but the struggles and resilience of our children during lockdown.

<https://youtu.be/my3SSdjr6UY>

We hope you enjoy the video. We thought it might be good to share this within the community.

We have written to Sajid Javid with the hope of some support or press with his help. However we appreciate he is very busy.

Fairfield Flicks joins BAA

Bromsgrove Arts Alive is delighted to welcome new members Fairfield Flicks. Based at Fairfield Village Hall, Fairfield Flicks is a voluntary run community cinema and live entertainment venue. Their goal is to bring people together, and reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Upcoming events:

Dear Evan Hansen (12A)
Wednesday 20th April 7.30pm

Junior Flicks: Clifford the Big Red Dog (PG)
Thursday 21st April 11.00am

The 311 (12A)
Sunday 8th May 7.30pm

Wildfire (15)
Wednesday 18th May 7.30pm

Cyrano (12A)
Wednesday 25th May 2.15pm

There is also live music on Saturday 7th May at 8pm with Karen Swan, The Twiddlers and Abi Budgen
All details at www.fairfieldflicks.org.uk



St John's choir and friends rehearse for a performance of Fauré's Requiem on Palm Sunday evening



Come dance with 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. Novices and experienced dancers are welcome, all dances are walked through first with the instructions given by a caller. No need to come with a partner.

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 01905 353995

liz@the-stantons.uk or visit <https://avoncroftfdg.weebly.com/>

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



NEW Cultural Compact for Northeast Worcestershire BDC Arts Development

Our inaugural event held at the end of January brought together a great many people from public, private and third sectors. The attendance was by invitation and via press notices which generated considerable interest. There was a particularly wide range of people present. An unfortunate gap was people from the further and higher education sector. Given the overlap of objectives in cultural compacts, and the development of education and skills, this is something to be addressed for future activities. We know that there have already been several bi and trilateral meetings because of the event, and we hope to see some positive impacts and joint working coming forward. The Cultural Compact for Northeast Worcestershire has received funding from Arts Council England.

However, in the short term we need to identify a plan to help harness the palpable energy and enthusiasm. This is particularly timely in view of the Government's publishing of the Levelling up white paper on 2nd February, with one of its 12 missions featuring the importance of developing pride in place. It explicitly references the need to use culture to build on the sense of civic pride, community and potential which already exists in the area, but which can always be developed further.

Furthermore, it has been announced today that Redditch has become one of the 109 Levelling up for Culture Places. This and much more amounts to a great opportunity for us all. To pursue this, we plan to do the following: Meet with the leaders, portfolio holders and relevant officers in both authorities to agree a very clear message about what local government can do to support the work of the compact. This is an important part of the process to ensure that there is no unrealistic expectation of funding, given the financial pressures facing all local authorities. However, it does also allow us to agree what can be offered, which might include: Support with publicity, celebrating those taking a lead in particular fields, highlighting practical support for events, providing facilities to host events such as encouraging volunteering, highlighting the amount of support already given through ours and others work such as reduced business rates for charities and the wider agenda around levelling up funds or the council's wider priorities.

It should also allow us to check that the themes for the compact remain to encourage coherent partnership working to enable: More people participating in more ways, to promote pride in the area Cultural Compact for Northeast Worcestershire, encourage a series of smaller groups to meet, themed around particular interests to explore joint working potential. Themes could be outdoor nature, heritage, participatory arts, health, commercial and business.

Their aim will be to encourage them to share audience/ participation data, support one another in developing activities, and contribute to overall programme of activities set out below. The aim will be to have convened these meetings by April and agree a programme of activities linked to activities and events which are already in the diary to celebrate under the banner of the Compact taking place between June and September.

We're particularly pleased to welcome on board North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) who have joined forces with us to promote a Recovery through Creativity Grant scheme for Bromsgrove. Bromsgrove District Council asked for expressions of interest from businesses and organisations in the creative industries sectors to apply for grant funding to deliver activities and projects that will attract residents and visitors to Bromsgrove Town Centre and Local Centres through the provision of new experiences.

These include, but were not limited to outdoor public art, art exhibitions, local festivals, arts and crafts markets, food markets, community events, street art, street performances etc. The Cultural Compact for Northeast Worcestershire has worked closely with NWEDR to promote this opportunity and we very much look forward to them being on board and utilising the grant scheme to get the Compact off to a great start.

For further information regarding the Cultural Compact for Northeast Worcestershire please contact Huw Moseley, Arts Development Officer – h.moseley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

South Birmingham Branch of the Guild of Silk Painters

Our group are pleased to be able to meet together again and are now settled into meeting on the second Tuesday of the month from 1.00 – 3.00 pm at the Beacon Church Centre in Rubery B45 9DL.

At a recent meeting we were pleased to try out the technique used by one of our members when she attended the Freedom Festival in September where we bonded our painted silk to glass to make earrings and pendants.



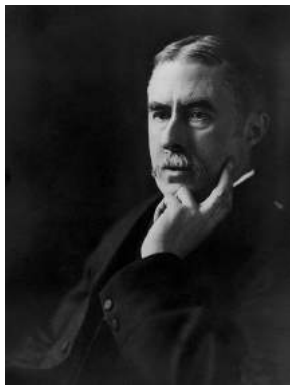
We are looking forward to a day class during the summer and hope to be able to do marbling on silk with Mary Day. Thanks to councillor Adrian Kriss for supporting this event. We will be supporting Bromsgrove Festival when we mount a silk painting display at Rubery Library during July, with a theme of the Queen's Jubilee year.

Some of our members assisted on the Guild of Silk Painters stand at Sewing for Pleasure at the NEC. It was lovely to be at an exhibition again and we had many visitors stop for a while, rest their feet and create a silk painted card.



We would love to welcome more new members to our friendly group, whether familiar with silk painting or new to it. We have plenty of supplies to help you get going. Contact Kay Morris at kaymo@talktalk.net

Housman Birthday Commemorations



Members of the Housman Society and guests celebrated the birthday of poet and writer **AE Housman on Friday 25th March**. It was the first time in two years the commemoration had taken place in public, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The author of "A Shropshire Lad" and proud Bromsgrove son was born in the town in 1859. He grew up at Perry Hall and was a pupil at Bromsgrove School. After studying at

Oxford he went on to become Professor of Latin at University College, London, and published his famous collection of poems in 1896. Such is its success, it has never since been out of print. Housman moved to Cambridge in 1911 and spent the rest of his life there as Kennedy Professor of Latin and a Fellow of Trinity College.

Society members gathered around Housman's statue in Bromsgrove High Street to mark not only his birthday but also the centenary of his second volume of poems

which was titled simply Last Poems. Special guest at the event was Jo Slade, latterly Bailiff of Bromsgrove, who read two of Housman's poems at the statue. Jo's choice of poems was "Loveilest of trees" from A Shropshire Lad which evoked thoughts of Spring and "The Laws of God, the laws of man" from Last Poems which she thought was befitting of the current situation in the world.

After the readings guests walked to Bromsgrove School where a lunch was served in the Old Chapel and Jo was invited to speak about the Housman family and the Court Leet.

Society Chairman, Peter Waine, expressed his pleasure at being back in Bromsgrove after the two-year gap. He said: "I am delighted we can once again celebrate Bromsgrove's most famous son, most grateful to our guest speaker for her informative talk and we are especially pleased to be able to celebrate the centenary year of his second poetry collection with our new publication."

The centenary edition of Last Poems will be launched at the Society's AGM held in Ludlow on Saturday 23rd April. The poems are preceded by a short foreword by Sir Andrew Motion, Poet Laureate 1999-2009, and an introduction by the late Edgar Vincent, author of a biography of Housman. The book includes commentary on the poems by John Cartwright and original artwork.

For further details about the Society, how to become a member and to purchase the new book, visit the website www.housman-society.co.uk



From Sea lions to Sharks with Bromsgrove Photographic Society

Life has changed so much over the past two years, due to Covid. For many their passion for photography has been a reason to get up in the morning.

Bromsgrove Photographic Society are in the privileged position of having gained new members during this difficult time and look forward to continuing to enjoy the passion that is "Photography".

With everything from the Early Session, which is a refresher talk for existing members and solid foundation advice for new members, to the Main Session, where we have Studio Nights, Competition Nights, Practical Nights and Speakers, Tuesday meetings are held at **Avoncroft Arts Centre at 8PM**. Further details can be seen on our website www.bromsgroveps.com.

With this in mind, Bromsgrove Photographic Society are delighted and excited to be hosting a brilliant presentation by the highly acclaimed photographer, **David Keep**. The talk "**From Sea Lions to Sharks**" on Tuesday May 3rd, takes viewers into the world of David Keep's underwater photography which has spanned the world and achieved numerous international awards. In this talk David tells you how he goes about capturing his images. Behind the scenes videos accompany the stories as he covers sharks, crocodiles, diving gannets, turtles, sea lions and many more.

Tickets (£8) can be bought via the link davidkeepphotography.co.uk/bromsgrove-talk. Bromsgrove Photographic Society wish photographers, wherever they are, the best of times to come.

... adventures photographing the magnificent creatures that live in the oceans around our world



Tuesday 3rd May, 7.30pm, Avoncroft Arts Centre, Bromsgrove B60 4JS

Tickets (£8) : 07932 191892 : davidkeepphotography.co.uk/bromsgrove-talk

Great speakers booked for WORDS

WORDS staged its first event in its 2022 programme at the end of March, when Peter Lloyd, the Series Editor of "Doctors" gave an entertaining and informative presentation on the production of the long running and award winning BBC Drama Series in "From Script to Screen".

It took place in a new venue for WORDS, the Learning and Resource Centre at Bromsgrove School, and, at 7.30.p.m on Wednesday, May 11th, the next WORDS event will be in the same venue, when the political journalist, broadcaster and commentator Steve Richards speaks on "Reflections on Leadership - from Harold Wilson to Boris Johnson".



We have been trying to get Steve as a guest for several years now and has finally secured him, having heard his fascinating presentation at the Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival last September. Tickets are on sale via the Ticket Source Website www.ticketsource.co.uk and, if you have an interest in politics, it is an evening not to be missed.

And at 7.30.p.m on Thursday July 14th at Bromsgrove Rugby Club, as part of The Bromsgrove Festival, Pat Murphy, who has spent a lifetime reporting on cricket and football for BBC Radio, as well as producing over forty books with such as Ian Botham, Andrew Flintoff, Imran Khan and the late Bob Willis, will be speaking to WORDS on "This Sporting Life".



He has a fund of stories and insights into the world of sports broadcasting - we saw him at the Bewdley Festival in 2019 and immediately he went into our list of "Must Haves for WORDS !!" Again, tickets are on sale via the Ticket Source Website

Tribute to Valerie Richardson

Robin Shaw gave the following tribute to Valerie at the AGM of WORDS

At Valerie's funeral the vicar in his address took as his theme "And Valerie was there". He was speaking of the church and church related events and her commitment to being an active participant. It is remarkable that the same could be said of Valerie in relation to a range of other activities and organisations - all of which she supported concurrently. The two I am most aware of are The Housman Society and WORDS. Valerie was a member of both over a long period. She was a regular attender at meetings and events and a long serving member of the committees.

With WORDS the constitution required committee members to stand down after four years and take a break so her committee membership was intermittent. That didn't stop her being ready to help in the breaks. Valerie was on the committee the year that Michael Cooper tragically and suddenly died. It was about 2001 Michael, was the current chairman. I well remember the dismay of the first committee meeting without him. It was then that Valerie stepped into the breach and took on the chairmanship for the next few years.

We saw it as a tribute and an obligation to Michael to keep WORDS going - and we did. Valerie rose to the occasion.

But Valerie's commitment was not just shown on the committee. What I admire was her readiness to do the lesser jobs as well, even when she was not on the committee: to help serve the drinks, to give out the leaflets, to come to meetings even when the speaker wasn't known to her. Kate Shaw remembers Valerie being very helpful when she was trying to get "Little WORDS" going. Valerie volunteered to go round schools with leaflets and did it thoroughly. And more recently helping with ideas for poems to circulate in Lockdown

Valerie was loyal to, and an asset, to all the organisations to which she belonged. WORDS was one of them. As the vicar said; "And Valerie was there".

Rubery Drama Group turns Beige

Following their long awaited production of Don't Dress for dinner which was well received by a returning audience just getting used to being out and about, the group are now in rehearsal for the comedy, Fifty Shades of Beige.

This is a play written by local writer Roger Goddard. It is essentially about growing old and the problems that come with that, but in the main, though your body may be ageing, your feelings and thoughts inside your head remain largely unaltered and indeed senior citizens retain their wonderful sense of humour whatever life throws at them. The play is being directed by Dave Healing who joined the drama group for Don't Dress for Dinner.

The play is to be performed from Thursday to Saturday, 28th - 30th April. Doors open at 7 o'clock for a 7.30 performance. Tickets are £8, with £7 concessions and will be available to pick up on the door by contacting 0121 453 88733 or 0121 445 2323.

Meanwhile, we meet each Wednesday evening at 7.30 pm at the Beacon Church Centre, Whetty Lane Rubery B45 9DL. Contact kaymo@talktalk.net if you are thinking of joining the group or would like any further information.

Bromsgrove Festival Looks Forward

Events for a Festival in 2021 were slow to materialise due mainly to the uncertainty regarding future pandemic restrictions. The Festival trustees did plan a number of events for the High Street during late June/July but with restrictions still in place, these were postponed until September. Three events had been planned but in the event only two of them took place viz a Buskers Day on the High Street and a day with the Severn Arts Travelling Music Bus in The Bird Box for which costs were incurred including the provision of Public Liability Insurance.

And so on to 2022 when, it is to be hoped, Covid 19 plays little or no part in the staging of the Festival.



Indeed, many of the organisations who have previously contributed to The Festival have already submitted events

for 2022. One notable loss, of course, is the 10 or 12 events that Artrix contributed to the celebration.

The Directors and Trustees of the Bromsgrove Festival would like to thank all those who contributed to making the 2019 and earlier events a success. The Festival is planned and run entirely by unpaid volunteers and, with the continuing decline in the availability of public funding for the arts, the approach of utilising local participants wherever possible to stage Festival events will continue to be pursued. However, in addition, in 2022 and in subsequent years, The Festival will be taking the findings of the Tell Me What You Want survey into account with a view to involving more residents playing an active role in the arts and pursuing the goal of establishing Bromsgrove as a centre of excellence with regard to resident participation.

The support of Bromsgrove District Council is greatly appreciated and has been demonstrated to be a beneficial investment for the local community. The inclusion in the Festival of nationally-recognised performers does require significant external funding, and potential sources of such funding are being explored. There is every reason to believe that the 2022 Festival can be at least as successful as its predecessors.

Projects from the Friends of St John's

The Cracked Nave Beam



A crack in the oak beam in the nave was noticed last spring and the church's Structural Engineer, Ian Coney, reported that urgent repairs were necessary to ensure that the beam was secured and that the crack didn't get any worse. Initially the current repair work was carried out from an access platform, but due to

the solid nature of the old oak beam internal scaffolding was required to ensure the safety of the contractors. To secure the new metal support beams and brackets to the existing ancient beam, the 15inch thick old oak beam had to be drilled. This allowed for steel bolts through the beam to connect the new support beam and brackets together. The ancient oak beam is so solid that many drill bits were broken whilst trying to drill the holes!



Friends were extremely grateful to The Rotary Club of Bromsgrove for the donation of £7,000 towards the repairs and to Bromsgrove District Council's Community Grant Scheme for the grant of £4,950.

The Aisle Pinnacle

The pinnacle on the north-east aisle corner of St John's had become unstable due to exposure to the wind and rain which had caused deterioration in the stone base. The pinnacle was removed and is being re-built off site by a specialist stonemason who will return it to the church when the weather improves. The surrounding stonework will be pinned and repointed at the same time.

Worcestershire's tallest Spire.

The annual inspection of the spire by Dawson Steeplejacks reported that the cracks in the top section continue to get worse. Their ladders have been left in place so that the essential repair work can be carried out as soon as possible. Thankfully the spire was not affected by storm Eunice, but the project to rebuild the failing top section of the spire is now a priority for the Friends of St John's.



Can you help?

The cost of these three projects and further inspections of the spire combined will be in the region of £30,000, and the rebuilding of the spire top is estimated to cost £250,000.

If you can help by joining friends or by making a contribution, please email friends.stjohns.church@gmail.com

Creative Art Showcase 22

Art Exhibition, Artisan Craft Market & Performance Showcase

The Main Event for 2022 will take place at Bromsgrove School in the Arena and hospitality suite on October 29th-30th.

This year's show will be bigger and better as we have more dedicated space than the previous show and look forward to entertaining you with another innovative and striking Art Exhibition. Combined with artisan crafters selling seasonal and timeless collectibles, hand made by local small business from across the Midlands. There will be a wide variety of taster craft workshops available for you to book a place and try something new. The Showcase will include a host of talent in pop up performances all adding to the festival feel and fun of the Event.

Layouts, plans and details are still being developed, but this is going to be a blast!

All the details of what Creative Arts are up to (including a Curry and quiz night on April 30th at Dodford Village Hall) check out creativeartshowcase.org



Coffee Concerts aid Friends' Appeal

Two of the recent Saturday morning Cake and Coffee concerts at St John's church were earmarked to raise money for the Friends of St John who have arranged for a damaged roof beam to be repaired (see page 6).

The first of these, on February 12th, featured the Chameleon quintet who gave a sparkling light-hearted 50 minutes worth of entertainment.



Then in March the ever-popular Vintage Class came and sang to us, interspersed with poetry by Bromsgrove's own Jenna Plewes. The theme of the morning was "Keep Calm and Carry on".



Vintage songs combined with poetry written during lockdown to celebrate resilience in uncertain times.

Jenna herself was due to read the poetry but was unfortunately hit with Covid at the last minute. Anna Dear stepped in to read at very short notice and the words and music resonated together so well. The book containing the poetry 'The Underside of things' was on sale afterwards in aid of Red Cross Ukraine.

Both concerts together raised a fantastic £623.74 towards the Friends Beam Repair.

(Pictured: Vintage Class at St Johns)

There are still concerts to come in May and June, with donations going towards the tuning and maintenance of the organ at the church.

On May 21st, there will be a showcase featuring students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Harp Department, and on June 18th, there will be a selection of folksongs, madrigals and modern vocal arrangements for a Summer morning, performed by The Singing Villeins.

Barnt Green Choral Society get ready for the Roaring Twenties

We enjoyed singing Carl Orff's Carmina Burana in March - it works really well in Orff's own version for two pianos and an array of percussion instruments. Of course putting on any concert at the moment is rather precarious because one never knows when Covid is going to cause problems, and we did have a few to overcome, but fortunately our soloists Dave Cpulson and Claire Johnson were in good form and fully recovered for the concert.

We are now looking forward to an afternoon's entertainment featuring George Gershwin and his contemporaries in a Summer concert - The Roaring Twenties. It's at St Andrew's Church Barnt Green on June 18th. The time will be announced on barntgreenchoralsociety.org

THE MIDLAND SINFONIA

How gratifying to report that, after its Covid-enforced break, The Midland Sinfonia were able to perform once again before an audience which was even larger than that for international guitarist Craig Ogden over two years ago!

High-spirited, almost carnival-like, the “Spring Family Concert” held in St Laurence Church, Alvechurch, on March 12th, certainly lived up to its billing as “a fun-filled afternoon performed by Shulah Oliver and friends”. The music included Vivaldi’s “Spring” from The Four Seasons and excerpts from Tchaikovsky’s “Sleeping Beauty” ballet (complete with narrator and young dancers from Worcester-based Translucent Dance Studio). Popular choral items were also sung with aplomb by the Crown Meadow First School Choir.

TMS, who recently appointed Shulah as Artistic Director - she’s well-known in her various roles as solo and chamber violinist, teacher and orchestral leader - are on a mission to widen public appeal for live classical music (the term ‘classical’ being interpreted in a fairly broad sense). Not only does the larger audience generate more revenue - vital though that is, as we all know; it also enriches the social and cultural life of the community as a whole. (Outreach work locally among schools, care homes and people with dementia, is an interesting development also being developed.)

There are two further concerts scheduled for the current season (7th May and 16th July). Both will follow a similar pattern to the March event, featuring such staple works as “The Lark Ascending” (Vaughan Williams), “Appalachian Spring” (Copland) and “Carnival of the Animals” (Saint-Saens), alongside familiar contemporary pieces and arrangements which will include choirs and other local performers.

However, by no means will the ‘traditional’ classical concerts familiar to TMS audiences be abandoned. They will continue to hold their place in the annual TMS calendar - as will the annual “Young Musicians’ Showcase” (18th June) and also the ever-popular “Quiz and Supper Evening” (8th October).

Meanwhile, do keep in touch with TMS (www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk) for up-to-date news about concerts and other events.

Court Leet’s June Fair Day

On Saturday 25th June 2022 the Bromsgrove Court Leet Fair Day & Street Market will return to the town.

The Ancient Court Leet of the Manor of Bromsgrove will celebrate the 1199 Charter granted by King John to hold a Fair on Midsummers Day. The colourful, traditional procession of Court Leet Members and guests will start from Housman Hall on Kidderminster Road and finish in Bromsgrove High Street. At the Housman Statue the Bailiff Neil Beaumont will proclaim the Charter of 1199 and assizes of goods offered for sale in the town will be carried out by the officers of the Court, at 11am.



An all day street market with local crafters, schools and charities, some in traditional costume will take place alongside the regular Saturday markets. All welcome! Come along and celebrate 823 years of history in our town.

Further details www.bromsgrovecourtleet.co.uk or www.facebook.com/CourtLeetBromsgrove

Second Film featuring Bromsgrove Poets

The launch of another film made by Maz Salmou, *The Poets of Bromsgrove* took place on Friday January 28, 7pm, Methodist Centre, Bromsgrove.

The new film concentrates on current poets who live or have lived in the area. The aim was to encourage local people to express their own poetic sense of the place.

Poets were invited to submit their work and a group chaired by Jo Freeman of Severn Arts, and Huw Moseley, Arts Officer of Bromsgrove Council and several others chose the eight poems which feature in the new film.

The poets featured in the film are Faith Taylor, currently young poet laureate for Worcestershire, Rachel Broad, Michael Hurst, Anna Dear, Margaret Evans, Gwyn Evans, Pat Leighton and Jenna Plewes.

Maz Salmou directed the film and chose the locations with Margaret Evans coordinating the people and places. Maz is a Syrian director who is building quite a reputation locally for his work.

The film is threaded through by Faith Taylor's poem, Sparrow and shows Bromsgrove from dawn to dusk with music played by local musicians Charlotte and Alastair Moseley.

The link to the new video is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcO9xLB0rT0>

This follows on from the first film of Bromsgrove and its Poet which featured poets from Bromsgrove's past; AE Housman, Geoffrey Hill, Molly Holden and Sally Purcell.

The link to this film which can be freely viewed on line is

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ-y671HwNc>

Both films can also be accessed by searching for MazBroadcast on Youtube, Facebook and LinkedIn and on his web site.

Thanks for support for this initiative go to WORDS, The Bromsgrove Society, Bromsgrove Arts Association, The Housman Society and various individuals. Avoncroft Museum also allowed filming to take place.



left to right: Pat Gwyn Anna Mike Jenna Maz Margaret Rachel Faith

Festive Classics Music at Lunchtime concerts 2022

After a successful series of concerts last year as the country emerged from the Covid lockdown, Festive Classics will again be promoting a series of four lunch time concerts in June and July this year. Last year's concerts, whilst held with socially spaced seating and limitations on audience numbers, were very well received since, for all the performers and many of the audience, it was the first live music concert they had experienced in more than eighteen months.

This year, the concerts will be again be held at the Guesten Hall at Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings and, unlike last year, we shall be able to offer the option of a drink and light lunch after each hour long concert. Regrettably, because of space constraints at Guesten Hall, numbers for lunch will be strictly limited, so early booking is advised.

All the concerts start at 12 noon and full details are available at www.festiveclassics.co.uk

Wednesday 29th June: Moseley Chamber Ensemble

A performance of Mozart's 'Gran Partita', a wonderful seven movement serenade, showing off an astonishing variety of tones and textures for the thirteen woodwind players.

Wednesday 6th July: Red Snappers Jazz Band

The Red Snappers will entertain with a selection of traditional jazz favourites such as Sweet Georgia Brown, Who's Sorry Now and Alexander's Rag Time Band.

Wednesday 13th July: Selina Bella Strings Quartet

The well known local violinist, Shulah Oliver, will lead the Selina Bella Strings Quartet in a whistle stop tour around the world through music, including dances, folk songs and classical favourites.

Wednesday 20th July: Michael Lunts with Elgar

The premiere of his new show about Edward Elgar's life, with an emphasis on his friendships with ladies – a more serious show than we have been accustomed to from Michael.

Tickets for all concerts will be £12.50 each and the optional lunches will also be £12.50. These can be ordered on line by sending an e mail to pefestive21@gmail.com for bank details and a pdf ticket will be sent by e mail.

Alternatively, tickets can be ordered by post (at least seven days in advance to allow for postal delays) with a cheque and SAE to Festive Classics, 101 Finstall Road, Finstall, Bromsgrove, B60 3DE.



Tickets for concerts only may be purchased at the door if they are still available.

(Pictured: Shula Oliver)

THE OF orchestra john

The Orchestra of St John is thrilled to be chosen once more to be performing the grand finale of Bromsgrove Festival 2022, on Sunday the 24th July at 7.30pm.



The concert is based on Love and the Sea, centred round the beautiful setting of the 'Poem of Love and the

Sea' by French composer Ernest Chausson. The solo part will be sung by Claire Prewer (pictured), who is well-known to audiences in Bromsgrove.



The concert will be conducted by Dr Richard Jenkinson - Tchaikovsky - Romeo and Juliette Overture Chausson - Poem of Love and the Sea, Opus 19 Rachmaninov - Symphony No 2 in E minor, Opus 27.

After three years, it will be a great pleasure to play again for Bromsgrove Festival, and the members of the Orchestra of St John are looking forward to welcoming the audience back once more.

The Bromsgrove Society Summer School

The Bromsgrove Summer School makes a welcome return, offering courses over three days, 12-14th July, celebrating the rich agricultural, industrial, architectural and cultural history of Bromsgrove and district.

This year's topics are:

- Alvechurch – a Market Town. Tutors Prof. Chris Dyer and Dr Stephen Price
- The Talbots and Grafton Manor. Tutor Jenny Townshend
- Redditch - Needle-Land. Tutor Julian Hunt



You can download the booking form here. You can book and pay for the Bromsgrove Society Summer School online. The bookings are handled by an event management engine called Eventbrite. Click on the link below to be transferred to the Eventbrite site to complete the booking. You will need to create an account and then login to book this event. You may also see 'Eventbrite' mentioned in various emails etc. associated with this event. For help on key issues, see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) at the bottom of the event page. If you encounter technical difficulties please contact the webmaster at webmaster@bsoc.co.uk. For queries about the event itself please contact the organisers at summerschool@bsoc.co.uk.

Bromsgrove Folk Club Ukraine concert

With all proceeds going to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal local lively Americana style band, The Lost Notes are combining forces with Bromsgrove Folk Club and local artists including Keith Donnelly, Lauren South and Bromsgrove favourites Fairfield to stage a concert to raise funds for this urgent cause.

It promises to be quite a night. The Lost Notes: "absolutely brilliant....great harmony singers who have the crowds jumping"

Keith Donnelly: "one of the most popular and, yes, slightly crazy, figures in the folk world"

Lauren South: "the scene's most exciting new voice"

Fairfield: "Bromsgrove's answer to....well, just Bromsgrove answer"

Ticket application form www.bromsgrovefolkclub/

CONCERT FOR UKRAINE

THURSDAY 19TH MAY 7.30 PM

Catshill Club, 13 Meadow Road, Catshill, BROMSGROVE B61 0JJ

THE LOST NOTES

"Absolutely brilliant... Great harmony singers who have the crowds jumping!" – James Fagan

Solo and duo performances from

KEITH DONNELLY & LAUREN SOUTH

KEITH DONNELLY- "One of the most popular, and, yes slightly crazy, figures in the folk world!"
LAUREN SOUTH - "The scene's most exciting new voice."

FAIRFIELD

Bromsgrove's answer to... well, just Bromsgrove's answer!

Renowned composer to lead Bromsgrove Singing workshop

Primary age children from local first and middle schools are being invited to a “singing day” workshop as part of Bromsgrove Festival on Tuesday June 28th at St John’s Church.

Alexander L’Estrange is an award-winning British composer, arranger, jazz musician and choral animateur of international acclaim. A Master of Arts graduate of Oxford University, he has been dubbed “the added 9th of choral music” due to his consummate fusion of the English choral tradition with jazz.

L’Estrange is best known for his popular series of 40-minute choral works for SATB choir, unison children and jazz quintet which began with “Zimbe! Come, sing the songs of Africa!” The piece took the choral world by storm, firmly establishing L’Estrange as one of the most popular choral composers of our age; Zimbe!’s 10th anniversary concert, conducted by the composer, took place at New York’s Carnegie Hall. Some Bromsgrove children and adults enjoyed performing this during the 2019 Bromsgrove Festival.



The music: Alexander composed a piece 10 years ago for the queen’s diamond Jubilee called ‘Zadok Rules - Hallelujah!’ for an adult choir and children to perform together. It is a witty whistle-stop tribute to kings and queens, royal music through the ages and the works of Handel. Details of the piece can be found here: <https://www.alexanderlestrange.com/zadok-rules-hallelujah> . A Children’s choir bundle will be sent to participating schools if they find they have a bit of time to look at it in advance. This contains a pdf of the children’s part, MP3 tracks and a video for children to sing to.

Provisional structure of the day: Start at 9.45am. Alexander will teach and rehearse with the children in the morning. After a packed lunch we will be joined by adult singers (who will have prepared in advance). The day is provisionally planned to end with a performance of the piece (which lasts around 8 minutes) for an audience of parents and conclude by 4pm.

The day is being organised by Bromsgrove Singing Projects, set up in 2019 by Ruth Henley and Steve Cowperthwaite to promote community singing events in Bromsgrove. Any adults interested in taking part should contact Ruth at r.g.henley@btinternet.com.

Bromsgrove Arts Alive

History, Aims and Objectives

A potted history and a few things you should know about what we do.

Bromsgrove Arts Alive, whose principal aim is to support the arts in and around the Bromsgrove, was established in 2006 following an initiative by Huw Moseley, Arts Development Officer, Bromsgrove District Council.

In 2020 Bromsgrove Arts Alive became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation

With 50 diverse groups and individuals as members, we represent the best in local arts.

We produce a comprehensive members directory leaflet with a regularly updated version on this web site, plus News, and an Events Diary offering comprehensive information on members current and future events.

To take part in future events and be involved in a local influential arts group, do consider becoming a BAA member. Whether as an individual or a group – the single, annually renewable, fee is only £15!

Objectives

- To promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit in particular by acting as an umbrella body for organisations and individuals in the Bromsgrove District in order to facilitate greater public access to, and increased public participation in, the arts, culture, and heritage.
- To promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Bromsgrove District the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the conditions of life of the said inhabitants.

Bromsgrove Arts Alive Poem Commission

BAA was delighted to commission Worcestershire Young Poet Laureate Faith Taylor to write a poem connected with our Arts organisations. Faith is local to Bromsgrove and attends South Bromsgrove High School.

Faith says "The poem is inspired by the return of the arts after the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon researching Bromsgrove Arts Alive I found you work with many local arts, so I tried to reflect this in the poem by focusing on a different form of art in each stanza".

The Arts are Alive

By Faith Taylor

Five minutes until curtain call

As a live audience fills the once empty stalls

We're ready to make our encore (again)

While applause echoes throughout the halls

Four new, blank canvases

Ready to be transformed into art

Their potential is so inviting, enticing;

A masterpiece sketched within my heart

Three poems to perform

But not to my phone camera this time

What do I do with my hands? My face?

Did I remember to pronounce that rhyme?

Two songs to learn for choir

As we're able to sing together once more

No more Zoom, no more solo ensembles

In harmony, the way we were before

One pandemic, trying to dim our limelight

Zero chances of giving up.

Town Crier organising Celebration Concert

It's been ridiculously busy with **33 engagements since the last BAA newsletter.** Highlights were officiating at Charlotte Moseley's wedding, all the festivities around Christmas and being on the television having been asked to help promote the Vaccine Campaign!

This year's stacking up – there's Town Crying Competitions at Alcester, Warwick and Bromyard, the Jubilee celebrations show a packed itinerary.

The Bromsgrove Festival is going to be fabulous, at the start of which I'm promoting a Celebration Concert in association with the Orchestra of St John – bring your waltzing shoes (Andre Rieu has a lot to answer for!) and who wants to join in with the Hallelujah Chorus! Let's raise the roof! It is at St John's Church on Sunday June 26th at 7.30pm



Members of Bromsgrove Arts Alive contributing to this edition

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• Friends of St Johns	6
• Housman Society	8
• The Court Leet	8
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Apologies as ever for errors and omissions in this edition.
The next Newsletter (Autumn) is published in October.
Deadline for contributions to
steve.cowperthwaite@googlemail.com is 30th September