

Bromsgrove Christmas Markets and Light Switch On

Friday 18th and Saturday 19th November are the dates for the 2022 Bromsgrove Christmas Markets, organised by the Friends of St John's. Two days of craft markets and entertainment, held to support local producers and raise funds for Bromsgrove's ancient church building. As in previous years the town's Christmas Lights will be switched on in the High Street on the Saturday.

Keep an eye on Facebook and the local press for details.



Norton Museum reopening soon

The museum is very close to reopening. "All the building work is finished, the frontage looks fabulous, the disabled access lift is in and it's now a massive job of repainting and cleaning up - you wouldn't believe how deep the dust is!", said a spokesperson. Look out for a massive celebration to mark the reopening - hopefully before Christmas.

Local Musicians' Tribute to Bernard Hall-Mancey

A wonderful memorial concert for Bernard Hall-Mancey took place at The Elgar Concert Hall, University of Birmingham, on 1st October

For the last four decades, Bernard supported music and the arts in Bromsgrove, including as the Director of Music at Bromsgrove School between 1975 and 1987. Right up until his death in April 2020 after contracting Covid-19, Bernard organised events, concerts, bursaries and competitions in the town, inspiring young people to develop their passion for music to the highest standards. Bernard was a true local legend.

Bernard served on the committee of The Orchestra of St. John, Bromsgrove, and the orchestra honoured him with a programme that was close to his heart. Richard Jenkinson conducted four works, including Vaughan Williams' *Toward the Unknown Region*, a piece that Covid-19 restrictions had prevented from being played at Bernard's funeral. In this piece, the orchestra was joined by a chorus formed of an augmented Barnt Green Choral Society. The other works in the programme were Elgar's *Symphony No. 2* and *In the South* (Alassio), and Finzi's *Eclogue for Piano and Strings*, with soloist, Julian Hellaby. As senior examiners for the ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music), Bernard and Julian were colleagues and friends.



The whole concert was a fantastic tribute to a lovely man.

Creative Art Showcase all set to go

Bromsgrove School Arena and Hospitality Suite is the venue for Creative Art showcase 22 on the last weekend in October.

This year's show will be bigger and better as the organisers 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 collectables, hand made by local small business from across the Midlands. There are a wide variety of taster craft workshops available for you to book a place and try something new. The Showcase includes a host of talent in pop up performances all adding to the festival feel and fun of the Event. A rolling programme of creative performance will feature poet/musician Spoz, Young talented pianist Milo, the Rock Choir, Got 2 Sing choir and lots more.

Watch out for our very friendly Bee Creative friends buzzing around making the day more fun for everyone!

The show is open on Saturday 29th October from 10am-5pm and on Sunday 30th 10am-4.30pm.

Tickets are available here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/creative-art-showcase> or via the Creative Arts website.



Summer School Success

The tenth Bromsgrove Society Summer School took place in July and was a great success with two out of three courses being fully booked and the other nearly so.

Chris Nesbitt who administers the Summer School was once again assisted by her team of helpers. Chris says that some super positive comments were received afterwards from participants who were particularly appreciative of being able to return after a two year absence.

Each day the morning talks were followed by an excellent lunch in the Old Chapel at Bromsgrove School. Afternoon visits were made to Alvechurch, Grafton Manor and Forge Mill Needle Museum.

Thank you are extended to the speakers, organisers and participants. The 2023 Summer School will take place from

Tuesday 11th to Thursday 13th July, again at Bromsgrove School. Further details will be available from the Bromsgrove Society in the Spring. Keep an eye on the website www.bsoc.co.uk or become a member and receive the newsletter and email updates. Membership costs just £9 per year for an individual.



Rubery Drama group hits 70

The group was pleased to take part in the Bromsgrove Festival in June at their usual venue when they staged an event named **The Golden Age of Radio**. They performed a selection of rehearsed radio plays which meant the actors took on multiple characters during the evening. There were two Sherlock Homes plays: *The Adventure of the Tolling Bell* and *A Scandal in Bohemia*. These were followed by three episodes from Flash Gordon. The stage had the microphones and actors on one side and the other side featured all the sounds and side effects, much to the amusement of the audience during the evening as they were a performance in themselves.

The next production will be at the end of October, when Inspector Drake's Last Case, a whodunit spoof by David Tristram will be performed. This production is being performed during the 70th Anniversary year of the drama group. Definitely a case of how the years roll by ...

The group meets 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 - new members welcome!

Bromsgrove Festival looks forward to a more certain future

So we have put Bromsgrove Festival to bed for another twelve months (watch this space...it doesn't have to be purely annual!). It has been a very strange period and, following a total abandonment in 2020 and a severely reduced affair in 2021, we have this year witnessed a tentative commencement of the return to normal.

We have, as with many festival, suffered from a reduced number of events (the continued closure of Artrix...the nearest venue we had to an arts centre....didn't help that) and reduced attendances to some events as people are either still not confident to mix in public or have got used to staying in. That said, and on a more positive note, the three High Street Saturdays proved popular - especially the Day of Music and Dance - and the events supported by the Festival (Bite Sized Classics and The Bromsgrove Bluegrass gigs) and those events which came about as a result of the Festival being reinvigorated (*Festive Classics* Wednesday lunchtime concerts at Avoncroft) all continued to thrive.

Bromsgrove Folk Club continued its policy of booking acts during the Festival period which would appeal to a wider audience than just the folk genre. This continued policy was successful leading to a packed house for both concerts.

The diverse nature of the Festival continued with Heritage Walks and the three day Summer School organised by The Bromsgrove Society and a talk entitled *This Sporting Life* given by BBC sporting commentator/reporter, Pat Murphy, presented by WORDS. The *Bromsgrove Carnival*, *The Bluegrass Bash*, *Bromsgrove Pride* and the Concerts in the bandstand at Sanders Park all added to an eclectic mix of events.

We dabbled, with a view to expansion next year and beyond, with the results of the "Tell Me What You Want" survey carried out in 2019. The survey identified areas in the district and groups within those areas which would benefit from a greater involvement in "the arts" in its widest sense....not just classical music and painting but more accessible activities such as rock painting, flower arranging, spoken word, etc., and taking those, and other genres, out to the residents rather than being town-centric.

We once again produced a brochure of events and, whereas we understand and, indeed, will expand upon, the use of social media in its various forms, the 32 page hard-copy document remains the primary organ of publicity for the Festival. Our thanks go to all of the advertisers who made production of the brochure possible and we trust that some benefit came your way also. One final note....we are a small team and, if we are to build on on the success of the last nine years, we are looking for like-minded people to join us, especially if you have ideas on how the Festival and "the arts" could be developed to take in more of those areas which are on the fringe of that description. If you are interested please contact Bob Bignell at bbcons@aol.com with a view to discussing your possible involvement. Visit www.bromsgrovethefestival.co.uk for more information.

Successful Summer Series for Festive Classics in 2022

After the cancellation of the 2020 series of concerts in 2020 due to Covid and a limited, socially distanced, series of four concerts in 2021, Festive Classics returned to its full programme in 2022.

Festive Classics promoted a full series of four Wednesday lunchtime concerts at the Guesten Hall, Avoncroft, during the period of the Bromsgrove Festival in late June and July 2022. All were well attended with audiences only slightly down on the levels achieved pre - Covid in 2019. The overall programme was devised to offer a range of musical genre and experiences and this approach was well received. Feedback has indicated that the series offers a valued mid-week classical music opportunity during the Festival period



The series kicked off with a concert by the newly formed Moseley Chamber Ensemble comprising 13 woodwind players who performed Mozart's wonderful Gran Partita.

This was followed by a concert by the Red Snappers Jazz Band led by the well-known Midlands jazz player, John Ruddick, who entertain with a selection of trad jazz favourites.

In a change of genre, the third concert featured local violinist Shulah Oliver and her Selina Bella Strings who gave the audience a whistle stop tour around the world through music.

The final concert marked the return of a Festive Classics audience favourite, Michael Lunts. Michael gave the public premiere of a new show about Edward Elgar's life that he had written during the lock down period. This was a more serious show than Michael has normally performed for us and it gave an excellent musical insight in to Elgar's relationship with his wife Alice.



Given the success of the 2022 series of Festive Classics concerts, the organising team are planning to promote another series of four Wednesday lunch time concerts during the Bromsgrove Festival in 2023. The same format is planned with an hour long concert starting at midday on each Wednesday followed by a light lunch for those who wish to stay on after the concert.

Busy time for Barnt Green Choral Society

The choir is having a busy time of it at the moment. It was a great privilege to sing Vaughan-Williams 'Toward the Unknown Region' at a memorial concert for Bernard Hall-Mancey (see page 1), although not the easiest of pieces to learn. Some of the choir also joined with singers from Birmingham Choral Union to perform at a concert in Handsworth featuring Vivaldi's Gloria in early October.

Later in October the choir will be singing at the St John's Coffee Concert on the 22nd with a German flavour - and including a movement from the Brahms Requiem. Then there is the Christmas concert to look forward to - a short afternoon event with refreshments afterwards on Saturday 3rd December at 3pm.



It will be performing all the Brahms Requiem at the concert in March so plenty to sing - and a wide variety too!

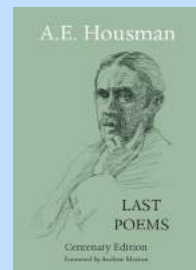
The Summer concert ('The Roaring Twenties') featured Gershwin and Cole Porter amongst others (pictured). Why not give them a try?

www.barntgreenchoralsociety.org

Housman Society Launch Book

To commemorate the centenary of the publication of AE Housman's *Last Poems* the Housman Society has commissioned a new edition of the book.

It contains a foreword by former Poet Laureate Andrew Motion and an introduction by Housman biographer Edgar Vincent. The poems are complemented by helpful commentaries by John Cartwright. The Centenary Edition has received a very favourable review in the Times Literary Supplement.



On Friday 9th September, as part of the Heritage Open Days initiative, Julian Hunt led a walking tour, in and around the town centre, looking at places associated with the Housman family.

There is much of interest happening both nationally and locally and recently a batch of letters has come to light through a fortuitous meeting between one Christine Walters and a Society member at the Highgate Institute; these will be published in the Society's 2022 Journal.

The first book of letters came in 1971 when Henry Maas edited *The Letters of A.E. Housman* (with a cover price of £5.50!) and it was assumed that it was a "complete" edition. However in 2007 Archie Burnett's *Letters of A.E. Housman* included many more unpublished letters and there followed in 2020 twenty-eight letters that A.E.H. had written to William Semple, found by his son after his father's death.

Further events include a Symposium at Cambridge, chaired by Chairman Peter Waine, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of *Last Poems* on 22nd October, when the original manuscript will be on display at the nearby Fitzwilliam Museum.

Anyone wanting more information on the Housman Society or to purchase a copy of the book should visit the website www.housman-society.co.uk

Back to a New Normal

News from BDC Arts Development, Leisure and Cultural Services

The Recovery Through Creativity projects were launched in late April to support the creative business sector across Bromsgrove's town centres. The purpose was to allow our local creative business sector to access funding to rebuild, to try out new ideas, to take risks and increase the number and diversity of the people engaging with their offer. From Creative Arts Showcase, Brenda Killigrew Sewing Studio, Bromsgrove Indie Club, and the Friends of St John's there were incredible ideas and offers for the town and community to be a part of and enjoy. Well done to all the organisations for delivering a lot in a short amount of time!

The Queens Platinum Jubilee saw 4 days of great events in Bromsgrove Town, from the 20th Anniversary of the Jubilee Bandstand in Sanders Park and the lighting of the National Beacon, Bromsgrove Festival and the Indie Club on the Birdbox, and the high street take over by Bromsgrove's Royal Legion. The Town proudly showed how to celebrate the 70 years of the Queen's reign.

The Court Leet triumphed again with its annual return to Bromsgrove High Street, complementing the normal market offer. This important event offers the town the opportunity to celebrate its long traditional market heritage in a contemporary offering.

It was great to be able to work with Bromsgrove Festival on its full return since 2019. With many exciting events returning, alongside new and 5 incredible Saturdays in Bromsgrove Town. There was plenty on offer and to do. The diversity of the Saturday offers is to be celebrated from the second Bromsgrove Pride to the return of Bromsgrove Carnival and an array of the new, music and dance.



We were very proud that the Queens Baton Relay visited Sanders Park on Saturday 23rd July on its journey to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Whilst it was early in the morning, it was great to be joined by so many from the community with our own Kevin Ward bringing the event alive with his distinctive crying and sense of occasion. It also celebrated 20 years of over 500 music and performances at the Golden Jubilee Bandstand.

We were excited to work together for the first time with Bromsgrove Arts Alive!, Bromsgrove Society and Avoncroft

Museum to jointly promote this year's Heritage Open Days from 9th to the 18th September across Bromsgrove and Redditch. It is planned for next year to build on what was achieved to support out amazing local heritage sector and to increase the number of people from all backgrounds visiting their fantastic sites and venues.

We are currently working with artists Keith Ashford and Elizabeth Turner to create a vibrant new Public Art for the recently redeveloped Recreation Ground in the heart of Bromsgrove Town Centre. The artists have been busy working with school and community groups to help design the artwork, ably supported by our own local historian Pat Tansell. The public art will celebrate the heritage of the site and the wider town and district, providing a splash of colour in the middle of this newly designed space.

For those who regularly visit Bromsgrove Town Centre will have noticed that the Dryad and the Boar statue has been removed. Rest assured that the statue has been removed to be carefully restored by the son of the craftsman, who made the statue from a mould from Bromsgrove Guild. The gleaming restored statue will be returning soon to the high street.



WORDS Bounces Back

WORDS is delighted to report that it has had a very successful return after the difficult years of 2020/1.

To date three events have been staged in 2022: In March, at the Learning and Resource Centre of Bromsgrove School, Peter Lloyd, the Series Producer of the BBC TV Series "Doctors", told a fascinated audience about making a television programme "From Script to Screen" .



At the 2021 Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival, we had heard Steve Richards, the political broadcaster, commentator and journalist, speak and immediately approached him about visiting WORDS.



To our great pleasure he accepted our invitation and in May spoke, again at the L and R Centre, to a packed audience about his "Reflections on Leadership" taking questions for half an hour afterwards

It was obvious on the night, and from the emails which we received afterwards, how much people enjoyed the evening. It was gratifying to have taken a "punt" which proved successful and encourages us to continue to try to book high profile speakers.

In July, this time at Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Pat Murphy, the highly respected BBC Sports Broadcaster, gave us a highly entertaining reflection on "This Sporting Life", telling us about all things to do with the Bears, the Pears, The Baggies, The Blues, The Villa and the Wolves and much more besides. Pat's new book, "BBC Sports Report" will be published at the end of September and undoubtedly will be a fascinating read.



Sadly, we do not have a dedicated independent bookshop in Bromsgrove. However, (and I declare an interest here as the business is owned by my son and daughter in law), Max Minerva's *Marvellous Books and More* in Bristol supply the books which are signed by the authors at our events and are happy to supply books by mail order to members of organisations affiliated to B.A.A.

Our next three events are already booked - keep an eye on the WORDS website or the B.A.A. website over the next few months for details - and we have our thinking caps on for a speaker for the 2023 Bromsgrove Festival

Court Leet at Avoncroft for Lammas

On Sunday 31 July, at Avoncroft Museum of Buildings, members of the Bromsgrove Court Leet were present to celebrate the Festival of Lammas.

Lammas-tide is an old festival to celebrate the bringing in of the grain harvest.

During the day there was special bread baking in the Tollhouse oven, ceremonial processions across the site and assizes by the historic Court in the afternoon. The assizes and sampling of the products was to make sure all the ingredients in the bread, honey and ale are good, proper and fit for consumption. The day was concluded with a thanksgiving service in the Bringsty Chapel.



This year's Panto from All and Sundry

Captain Hook has long since been defeated by Peter Pan and banished from Neverland but now he's returned even more nasty than before and he is determined to wreak his revenge on Peter. To help him in his task, he enlists the help of two of the nastiest pirates ever to sail the seas.

Hook is still wary of the ticking crocodile and has hired Australian crocodile hunter Croc Fundee to capture the beast. Meanwhile, Peter Pan enjoys another day having a lie-in after binge-watching the latest Netflix series. It seems that since defeating Hook and his pirates, Peter has become bored and no longer bothers to join in adventures with Tinkerbell and The Lost Boys, In fact, he doesn't even bother to fly anymore because it's too tiring. Peter discovers Hook has returned, but because he hasn't flown in ages, he has now lost the ability to fly. In order to regain the power of flight, he must travel to the Neverlandee tribe's sacred cave and drink from the magical spring. Peter and his friends travel through the Neverland Jungle, beset with a wild gorilla to reach the cave, however once inside, Hook dynamites the only entrance sealing Peter and his friends inside, along with the crocodile.

This version of Peter Pan has Peter's feet firmly on the floor, but will that enable Hook to finally defeat his once airborne adversary?

All & Sundry Productions Presents
A Brand New Family Pantomime!

HOOK'S REVENGE

RETURN TO NEVERLAND

Directed by
Alison Barrisford

Featuring the
Stags Door Dance
Academy

December 16th-23rd
Matinees 17th 18th & 23rd
Evenings 7:00pm Matinees 2:00pm

Cobham Theatre
Bromsgrove School
B60 2AF
Ample Free Parking

Tickets From £14.50
Family Tickets Available
Box Office
01527 579679
bromsgrove-school.co.uk/boxoffice

www.allandsundry.uk

Live Music at Fairfield Flicks

My Girl the River and Red Shoes are live on stage at 8pm on Saturday 19th November.

Created by Kris Wilkinson Hughes, **My Girl The River** was born out of a song. 'The Last Song' was the first song written for this americana, alt country, folk and roots project. Kris, hailing from Louisiana (and having lived in Jackson, MS and Nashville, TN) and English bassist Joe Hughes, have created a gorgeous collection of songs. As one fan responded 'it's like a delicately passionate love letter to the American South, soulfully crafted into something really special. Kris has a voice like sugared espresso, low and evocative with a sweet aftertaste and her eloquently confessional lyrics hit you right in the heart.'



Soaring, passionate vocals, chiming acoustic guitars and a superb catalogue of original songs in the Folk/Roots/Americana vein by Birmingham's Carolyn and Mark Evans lie at the heart of the **Red Shoes** success story. They have become a live favourite on the Club, Theatre and Festival circuit over

the years. Add to this the patronage of such legendary musicians as Dave Pegg, Dave Swarbrick, Joe Brown, Bev Bevan, Ric Sanders, Chris Leslie, PJ Wright, all of whom have guested on the three critically acclaimed albums by Red Shoes.

Advance Tickets £8.00 : On The Door £10.00

Fairfield Flicks is located at Fairfield Village Hall (B61 9LZ), there is free parking and a licenced bar. For information and advanced tickets for all Fairfield Flicks events visit www.fairfieldflicks.org.uk

French Film Festival at Fairfield Flicks

Beginning in 1992, the French Film Festival UK showcases a broad spectrum of French language movies and the number of participating venues has grown to encompass locations from Inverness to Plymouth by way of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham, Chichester and London.

Every year the festival provides a glittering, stimulating, and at times challenging array of films in cinemas, large & small, throughout the UK, and online.

One of this year's venues will be Bromsgrove's Fairfield Flicks who are screening two films, the comedy *The French Minister/Quai d'Orsay* and the drama *Vicky and her Mystery/Mystère*, which will be screened with English Subtitles.

The French Minister/Quai d'Orsay (15) – 16th November 7.30pm

A young speechwriter working in the French Foreign Ministry learns the impure nature of the political world.

Alexandre Taillard de Vorms is tall and impressive, a man with style, attractive to women. He also happens to be the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the land of enlightenment: France. With his silver mane and tanned, athletic body, he stalks the world stage, from the floor of the United Nations in New York to the powder keg of Oubanga. There, he calls on the powerful and invokes the mighty to bring peace, to calm the trigger-happy, and to cement his aura of Nobel Peace Prize winner-in-waiting. Alexandre Taillard de Vorms is a force to be reckoned with, waging his own war backed up by the holy trinity of diplomatic concepts: legitimacy, lucidity and efficacy. He takes on American neo-cons, corrupt Russians and money-grabbing Chinese. Perhaps the world doesn't deserve France's magnanimousness, but his art would be wasted if just restricted to home turf. Enter the young Arthur Vlamincq, graduate of the elite National School of Administration, who is hired as head of "language" at the foreign ministry. In other words, he is to write the minister's speeches. But he also has to learn to deal with the sensibilities of the boss and his entourage, and find his way between the private secretary and the special advisers who stalk the corridors of the *Quai d'Orsay* – the ministry's home – where stress, ambition and dirty dealing are the daily currency. But just as he thinks he can influence the fate of the world, everything seems threatened by the inertia of the technocrats.



Vicky and her Mystery/Mystère (PG) – 23rd November at 2.30pm



St ephane decides to move to the beautiful mountains of Cantal in order to reconnect with his eight-year-old daughter, Victoria, who has been silent since her mother's death. During a walk in the forest, a shepherd gives Victoria a puppy named

"Mystery" who will gradually give her a new taste for life. But very quickly, St ephane discovers that the animal is in reality a wolf... Despite the warnings and the danger of this situation, he cannot bring himself to separate his daughter from this seemingly harmless ball of fur.

South Birmingham Guild of Silk Painters in Bromsgrove Festival

Our branch was pleased to take part in the Bromsgrove Festival. We used the Queen's Platinum Jubilee for our display by looking at the wonderful range of hats we have seen the Queen wear over the years. It enabled us to show a variety of silk painting techniques, and it was good to be able to use some pieces which Mary always tells us never to throw away! Indeed, the pieces (not wanting to call them scraps) brought back memories of times when we did marbling, using salt, crazy patchwork using solufleece and so on. Choosing beads, lace, ribbons



to enhance the hats was fun to do. We bonded the pieces onto pelmet stiffener or heavy interfacing. Lin Fuller so very kindly dyed a huge piece of silk in a platinum colour for us to mount our display and she was responsible for the amazing centre piece actual hat in blue; a base hat from a charity shop Lin tells me. Sue Worwood provided a different display by mounting her hats very effectively. Sue Castle was very innovative by creating a three-D hat using a piece of a bra, or was it a shoulder pad? Whichever, it was just perfect to effectively display the hanging flowers.

It is pleasing to report that we have recently had some new arrivals at our meeting, one as a result of seeing our display being used for the Bromsgrove Festival on the front page of our local Advertiser.

The Quilt Festival is shortly to take place at the NEC and Lin and Kay will be pleased to join Anethia and the other helpers on some of the days.

Our member Julia Rollit is busy creating a contribution for a group she also belongs to – Mostly Felt - for an exhibition of

New Series of Coffee Concerts at St John's

A new series of popular 'Cake and Coffee' concerts started at St John's church on September 15th

Father and Son organists Paul and George Charman gave a thoughtful and well-judged recital during the period of National mourning, as part of Heritage open day.

On October 22nd, a concert to celebrate 40 years of twinning with Gronau in Germany is due to take place with Barnt Green Choral Society, Gemini Choir and soloist Dave Coulson.

Then on November 12th Bromsgrove Community Choir will join with Vintage Class singers and readers to perform a specially written sequence of Music and poetry entitled "Till the Boys Come Home"

The New Year will see youngsters from local schools performing on January 14th, and on February 25th, Baritone Paul Mocroft and Johnn Jenkin (piano) will give a recital featuring Butterworth's *Six Songs from a Shropshire Lad*, Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring*, plus songs by John Ireland, Ivor Gurney and others.

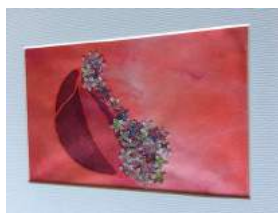
There is an eclectic folk music mix from 'Not All There' on March 18th, and Janine saxon will be entertaining with her flute on April 22nd, with more concerts in May and June.

All the concerts are on Saturday mornings at 10.30am and last around 50 minutes with tea, coffee and home-made cake afterwards. Admission is free with donations appreciated.



textile art at the Weavers Gallery in Ledbury in August.

We meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon, and of course welcome new members. The Tuesday can vary, so it's best to check with kaymo@talktalk.net



Productive Year for Stage Door Dance Academy

This year has proved to be a very productive one for the Students and their families. Since the last BAA Newsletter, the School staged a mainstream show called 'Curtain Call' at Bromsgrove School Cobham Theatre. All students of the Stage Door took part and performed in front of a very appreciative audience. The performers received wonderful reviews, which is always encouraging and rewarding for them to receive after months of rehearsal and commitment.

"It was such an amazing show, from the program, lights, audio, costumes but most of all the dancing and dancers themselves. We thoroughly enjoyed every piece - the talent on display was phenomenal"

"It was a fantastic show and great fun as well. Proud to be part of such a wonderful team! "It was an amazing show." "Thank you for giving the children this most wonderful experience and confidence building."

In July we celebrated the School's 28th Anniversary with a party for all the students and we also took part in the Bromsgrove Carnival Walking Parade, which had the theme of the Commonwealth. We proudly represented Malta as our chosen country and we were delighted to be presented with the trophy for the Best Walking Group with children as young as 3 years old



involved. They performed traditional Maltese dance steps along the route, which wasn't easy as the procession was moving steadily all the time, but they kept up remarkably well considering along with the hot sun that day. This was our 20th Carnival enjoyed by all and one to add to the Stage Door memory box. The following week, Students also showed their support for the Baton Bearers at Sanders Park and cheered them on whilst dressed in their Maltese outfits.



The summer break followed soon after this, but we have now returned to normal activities with vigour and have many events planned for the Autumn term.

We recently held our Summer Ball at Bromsgrove Hotel & Spa and had a wonderful



evening of fun and friendship. It was a great evening made all the more special, as it was our first Annual Ball since the pandemic in 2019. With excellent food and service from the Hotel and an opportunity to have our annual graduate presentation too, it made for a most enjoyable time. Our 2022 Graduates gave a lovely performance before they started their new journey at University. On 29th October, Stage Door students are looking forward to performing at the Creative Art Showcase, at Bromsgrove School Arena and to playing a part in the success of this event.

Students are also taking part in the 'Gotta Dance' show at the Palace Theatre, Redditch in November, along with the BBC Children in Need National Tapathon, also in November.

In December, there will be the traditional Christmas celebrations for the whole School along with our involvement in the Christmas Tree Festival in Stoke Prior and visit to the Enchanted Gardens at

Webb's of Wychbold. Students are also preparing for their IDTA dance exams by the end of the year.

Stage Door is busy with rehearsals for the All & Sundry pantomime, 'Hook's Revenge', which takes place in December at Bromsgrove Cobham Theatre. Several students will be playing leading roles along with a large number of Students playing minor roles and in the ensemble. We have even managed to entice parents to get involved both on and off stage. Although rehearsals take much commitment from all, it is one of the best of times when panto season is upon us.

A busy year for the Town Crier

What a year so far! Sorry this is a short missive, but I've been a bit busy!!

Jubilee Weekend 14 Events and over 100 Cries

Death of Queen Elizabeth and Accession of King Charles - 11 events and over 150 Cries

This in addition to all my usual events, including a special for 40 years Memorial after the Falklands War and a splendid and much sought after win at the Bromyard Town Crying Competition.



Bromsgrove Society welcomes New President and seeks treasurer

The Bromsgrove Society's Annual General Meeting was held at the New Guesten Hall, Avoncroft on 6th July members elected the team to take the Society forward.

Jo Slade, Pat Tansell and Sue Beaumont remain as Chair, Vice-Chair and Honorary Secretary respectively. Jenny Townshend was elected as the Society's new President.

Isobel Jarrett stepped down from the role of President and was thanked for her commitment to the Society. Isobel was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a gift voucher.

Isobel has been a member of the Bromsgrove Society since the founding year, 1980 when she also held the position of Secretary on the Commerce and Industry Panel. In 1982 Isobel joined the Executive Committee at the AGM and was Membership Secretary from 1984 to 1987. In 1990 she was voted to the position of Vice-Chairman which she held until 1996 when she became the Chairman of the Society. During Isobel's time as Chairman she was a leading campaigner against building on the Recreation Ground (1997) and involved in the planting schemes on Watt Close and in the town centre near Bejam (now Iceland). Isobel remained on the Executive Committee after standing down as Chairman in 1999 and in 2017 was elected Society President

Jenny Townshend joined the Society in the mid 1980s and from her early involvement was helpful in replying to various family history queries from other members. When the Local History Committee formed in the early 1990s Jenny was keen to be involved and began contributing articles to the Rousler from that time. In 1994 Jenny was co-editor of The Bromsgrove Rousler (Nos.9 - 11) with Barbara Hellawell and became the sole editor in 1997 until 2016 (Nos. 12 – 31).

Jenny contributed two chapters to the Society's publication on the Bromsgrove Guild in 1999, having been involved in the research project led by Quintin Watt. This year Jenny and Julian Hunt were the authors of the Society's latest publication Bromsgrove: The Story of a Market Town.

Jenny has been a speaker at the Society's Summer School every year since it first took place in 2011. At this year's Summer School she gave a talk about the Talbots and Grafton Manor.

Richard Aust agreed to continue as Honorary Treasurer until the end of the year, when the position will become vacant.

After the the AGM those in attendance enjoyed an excellent talk

from Brenda Killigrew from the Creative Street Tapestry project. The project was funded by GBSlep and Bromsgrove District Council as part of their #recoverythroughcreativity initiative and set out to highlight the independent businesses in Bromsgrove's Worcester Road. The photographs of the premises were printed on to fabric which was embellished with colourful stitches and haberdashery items.



This year's Bromsgrove Rousler

The Bromsgrove Society's annual publication "The Bromsgrove Rousler" will be published in November. This year's publication will be the 37th edition and the theme is one of reflection.

Mike Sharpe, editor of The Bromsgrove Rousler, describes what's in print in the latest edition. "The cover picture is linked to Sandra Mason's leading article which tells the story of William Townsend D.F.M., one of 19 pilots on the Dambuster's Raid over Germany, who later settled in Bromsgrove. May 2023 will see the 80th anniversary of this most remarkable Second World War mission. Memories of a much earlier period are recalled in the article by Harry Shinner. Writing in the 1970s, he set out his recollections of the town in the last years of the 19th century, leaving a highly insightful memoir. Meanwhile, Pam Harrison remembers life growing up in Worcestershire in the 1950s. The Cofton Tunnel collapse of 1928 is the focus of a detailed study by Richard Churchley. Long fascinated by stories of the accident he heard as a boy, Richard weaves together newspaper accounts and other sources, as well as presenting a folksong he has written on the subject.

The remaining articles look at two landmarks within the town centre. Jo Slade, Immediate Past Bailiff of the Court Leet, presents new research on connections between Perry Hall, the Housman family and the Court Leet. And I take the opportunity to update material on notable graves within Bromsgrove Cemetery which was previously published elsewhere.

The Bromsgrove Rousler is available to buy from local outlets or via the Society website. Visit www.bsoc.co.uk for details on how to join as a member and where to buy our publications, or contact the Editor on rousler@bsoc.co.uk

Bromsgrove Lecture

The 36th Bromsgrove Lecture will be held on Wednesday 19 April 2023 at Routh Hall, Bromsgrove School. Julian Hunt will present on The Housman Family in Bromsgrove. The lecture will be held in association with the Housman Society to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. There is also a Summer School to look forward to.

Treasurer position available.

The Bromsgrove Society is seeking a treasurer to take over from Richard Aust when he steps down from the role at the end of the year.

The Society Treasurer is responsible for keeping the accounts in order and paying any expenses, invoices or grants awarded. If you are interested in helping the Society with the role please do get in touch with Jo Slade by email at chair@bsoc.co.uk. Richard will be available to give a full handover

Local History Talks return in person

The Bromsgrove Society saw a return to the Methodist Centre on Stratford Road for their Autumn Season of Local History Talks on 20th September. Since March 2020 the talks have been held on Zoom, and whilst this has been very successful, the group welcomed the return to in person events.

A large audience gathered to see Julian Hunt talk about the nail-making trade in Halesowen, and how it compared to the same industry in Bromsgrove. Julian is a well renowned local history author and presenter. His first book was "A History of Halesowen" and his most recent book is co-authored with Jenny Townshend "Bromsgrove - The Story of a Market Town" and published by the Society earlier this year.



The next talk is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18th October at 7.45pm at the Methodist Centre. The ever-popular Max Keen will give his thoughts on King John in a presentation titled "The Worst or Most Useful King?". Max is known to dress in costume of the period and have a multimedia projection to accompany his lively and animated style of presenting. He spent eight months researching, he uses humour and personal anecdotes, as well as maps, contemporary pictures, paintings, effigies, photographs and cartoons to illustrate the talk. Max is well known for his favourite prop and 'source' – a Ladybird book!



King John is celebrated in Bromsgrove each year by the Court Leet on Fair Day who proclaim the Charter he granted to the town in 1199 to hold a market and annual fair on the Feast of St John the Baptist.

Entry to the talk is open to all, members pay £2 and non-members pay £3 on the door (cash only). The Society book stall sells a variety of local interest books and Society publications are available.

The Season of Talks will continue with Elaine Joyce on Tuesday 15th November giving the talk "Nine Witnesses for the Colonel - The King's Most Faithful Servant Colonel Careless and King Charles' Escape from Worcester in 1651". On Tuesday 6th December Philip Bowen will present "The Story of Christmas" to begin the festive season.

The Society is aware that not everyone can attend a Tuesday night talk in Bromsgrove. Many online attendees came from across the country, and the globe! Despite time and energy spent researching the options to present both in person and online, for various reasons this is not possible. Consequently, an additional talk will be held online, via the Zoom platform, on Thursday 15th December at 7.30pm. Christine Penny will present "The First Redbrick: The Foundation and Early Years of Birmingham University". This online talk will be free to attend, but advance registration is required via the website www.bsoc.co.uk.

originally written by Handel. However, the words, written by Alexander, told the history of the Kings and Queens of England starting with the Normans in a fun way. We were so fortunate to have the day led by Alexander. As soon as all the children arrived in the morning Alexander had the children singing 'Hallelujah' which they all thought was wonderful and he soon had them learning all the music from the work. The adults arrived just after lunch and, after a quick rehearsal with Alexander, joined the children. The whole piece was performed in front of an audience of parents and grandparents at 3:45pm. It was a thrilling day and it was wonderful to see and hear all the children singing their hearts out.

If you feel that you would like to join us then please feel free to come along. The choir is open to all who would like to sing. There is no audition and you would be made to feel very welcome. For more details email Ruth Henley on r.g.henley@btinternet.com or telephone 07812 145267.

Schools sing with Bromsgrove Community Choir

Since our return last October we have had quite a busy time. Last December we had the opportunity to sing carols at three venues, first at the library in Bromsgrove, then outside the café at Singleton's nursery in Catshill and finally in the Coffee Bar at the Methodist Church Centre in Bromsgrove.

We thought it wiser not to meet in January owing to Covid but started singing again in February. At the end of February we were invited to sing in the library as part of St David's Day Celebrations. We did think it would be nice to sing a song in Welsh but I'm afraid all we could manage were the words Ar Hyd Y Nos in the song All Though The Night. It was a lovely occasion and the choir certainly appreciated the welsh cakes that had been freshly made that morning by Bronwen, who is the Library Customer Advisor.

In March we took part in a concert with singers from Barnt Green Choral Society, St. John's Church Choir, Wind Players from the Orchestra of St John's and two pupils from North Bromsgrove High School to raise money for Ukraine. It was a lovely evening and over £1000 was raised for the Ukraine appeal. In May we entertained at a lunch club for housebound people that regularly meets at Catshill Baptist Church.

The beginning of June was exciting as we took part in the entertainment in Sanders Park as part of the town's celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The end of June was even more exciting as we took part in a Singing Day with about 120 children from 6 local schools (Lickey End and Catshill First; Lickey Hills Primary; St. John's, Parkside and Aston Fields Middle.) We performed Zadok Rules – Hallelujah! by Alexander L'Estrange which was originally written for the Queen's Golden Jubilee and includes a lot of well-known music that was

Friends of St Johns - Our projects



In the Spring BAA newsletter three projects were noted as taking place at St John's Church, and we are pleased to report that the cracked nave beam and north-east aisle pinnacle have both been successfully repaired. It was a sunny day when the final inspection on the pinnacle took place from the Red Spider access platform.

The Spire

As we reported in the spring, the concentration is now very much on the urgent repair works to St John's spire. Dawson steeplejacks will be onsite in early November to inspect the spire from the inside. 80% of the spire is a hollow structure which houses the bells at the base of the spire, and from the bell chamber the spire walls rise to the apex. The top section of the spire is solid with an internal metal rod which acts as a weight to keep the top in place. The cracks showing on the outside of the spire suggest that the internal rod is rusting and expanding, causing the cracks to appear. An internal inspection will allow a close up look at the stone and metal work to ascertain the extent to the problem.



Whatever the current state, there is no doubt that the top section needs to be rebuilt. The cost of this rebuild, with building costs rising considerably over the last 12 months, will likely be in excess of £300,000. The Friends of St John's team are making an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, but need local support too. If you can help, please email friends.stjohn.church@gmail.com

Heritage Open Day

On Saturday 19th September we enjoyed a wonderful day of heritage, community, fellowship and reflection in St. Johns Church. The Coffee and Cake Concert began with music inspired by Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II which was enjoyed by a large audience. Throughout the afternoon around 100 people came to St John's to climb the tower, ring the bells, have a go on the organ or find peace and tranquillity, and a moment to reflect, in the Chantry Chapel which had been set up to honour The Queen. At 6pm a Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance was held. It was attended by members of Bromsgrove Court Leet in robes and regalia, Bromsgrove's MP Sajid Javid gave a tribute to The Queen and Chairman of the Council Rod Laight delivered the reading. It was a day to remember in the long life of St John's Church.

We love to support Heritage Open Days which are free for all to attend, but of course the church can't survive with donations. If you would like to make a donation towards our current restoration projects please do so via our paypal page using this link www.tinyurl.com/Friends-donate Thank you.



Life's a Ball for Avoncroft Folk Dance Group

We have enjoyed a summer with lots of dancing, inside our hall and in gardens. Now we are looking forward to our autumn Playford Ball which gives us a chance to dress up in costume (not compulsory, but good fun!). If you'd like to join us we meet at Avoncroft Arts Centre, Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, B60 4JR on Thursday evenings 8-10pm. No need to bring a partner. More information – Liz Stanton 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



Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III

On Sunday 11th September, at 3 pm in Sanders Park Bromsgrove, a large crowd gathered to witness the Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III.

The previous day the first proclamation was made from the balcony at St James' Palace in London, and as tradition dictates, the message is spread through the country with the proclamation being made in every town, village and throughout cities.

The historic ceremony began with town crier Kevin Ward opening the proceedings and introducing the Deputy Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Mr Paul West QPM DL who spoke of the sadness shared by many who remember, with affection and gratitude, the extraordinary lifetime of service given by our longest reigning monarch.

Mr West reminded those present that our monarchy is built on the basis that the crown has passed in an unbroken line of succession through the centuries.

Bromsgrove District Council Chairman, Rod Laight took the centre stage to read out the proclamation, which he had collected from the Guildhall in Worcester following the official ceremony in London.

Joining the three on the band stand stage were members of the Court Leet, in full robes and regalia, to signify the importance of the ceremony to proclaim the King as our new monarch. Bailiff was flanked by Tythingmen with ceremonial poles and joined by the Immediate Past Bailiff, the Headborough and two Ealdormen.

The ceremony concluded with the national anthem, with many people singing God save the King for the first time, and three cheers of His Majesty King Charles III.

This historical occasion will be etched on the memories of those who attended and took part.



Dancers and Local Choirs feature in Midland Sinfonia Concerts

The year 2022 has been an eventful one for The Midland Sinfonia. Artistic Director Shulah Oliver had devised a series of programmes incorporating both well-established and less familiar items from the orchestral repertoire, as well as arrangements of popular film and theatre music which also feature dancers and local choirs.

This format was designed to reach out to a wider and larger audience, including some who might otherwise have steered clear of "classical music" concerts. This year they will have heard (and, hopefully, enjoyed) Bartok's *Romanian Dances*, Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*, Vivaldi's *Summer* from *The Four Seasons*, Saint-Seans' *The Carnival of Animals* and Copland's *Appalachian Spring* alongside instrumental and choral arrangements of such works as *What a Wonderful World* and *Rhythms of Life*.

In addition to these concerts, held as usual in St Laurence Church, Alvechurch, our traditional Young Musicians Showcase was staged. Well attended, it gave many local participants the opportunity to display their prodigious talents. At the other end of the age spectrum, residents of local care homes were invited to attend "open rehearsals" of TMS, which was a joyous experience for many.

We look forward to further highlights of the coming year: a Christmas Family Concert in December, an Evening of Jazz next spring, and a performance of Faure's Requiem Mass in July 2023, not to mention the unmissable Quiz and Supper Evening in February. For further details of this season's TMS concerts and events please visit our website www.midlandsinfonia.co.uk.

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Apologies as ever for errors and omissions in this edition. The next Newsletter (Spring 2023) is published in April. Deadline for contributions to steve.cowperthwaite@googlemail.com is 31st March 2023