

Choir Notes

by

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What to write for the Choir Notes?

Well, firstly a huge “Thank you” to Mike Beattie and Rob Hill who have written it so entertainingly over the last few years.

From now on the job will be taken on by a different member of the choir each month. As choirmaster, I thought I should take the lead. So I have found a few minutes at 20 to midnight, whilst sitting in a breakdown truck in Newport (don't ask!) waiting to be taken home to Chinnor. Life takes some funny twists and turns.

Choir has been interesting these last few months. We've not appeared at as many services as we usually expect to, owing largely to the building works. We have prepared a new anthem for Harvest, which we will have sung by the time you read this. It's by one Christopher Knott, an organist and peripatetic piano teacher who used to be involved at Llandaff Cathedral. A former member of Bledlow choir introduced me to a setting of the evening canticles by him which are virtually unknown but absolutely phenomenal. We sang them at Ripon Cathedral and I have used them at Ely, York Minster and St. Paul's with one of my other choirs. The piece, known as his 3rd service is quite magnificent and very much in the style of Herbert Howells but, dare I say it, more fun to sing.

I've been desperate to find out where Christopher Knott is and what else he has written. Cynthia, our organist is one of those fantastic people to whom you only have to mention a problem and she solves it. She donned her deerstalker, got out her pipe and magnifying glass and, before one could say “Elementary” she had tracked him down, corresponded with him and found out that he considered himself to have only written one other piece of note (Our Harvest anthem) and burned his 1st and 2nd services as he considered them no good.

Apart from that and our preparations for a weekend at Durham Cathedral (29th and 30th December) and St. Paul's (7th January), I have set the choir a real challenge for the inauguration service of Rev. Norbert. It's a setting of the Jubilate by the modern American composer, Howard Helvey. It includes some fearsome changes of time signature for choir and organist alike but is fantastically joyous.

We are so looking forward to having Rev. Norbert with us and hope this piece will be a real inspiration to us all to celebrate.

Please do get in touch with requests, likes and dislikes. Always good to have feedback, even when it's wrong!