

Preston Arts News

Secretary: Mike Cracknell, mikecracknell@blueyonder.co.uk
 25 Aspels Cres, Penwortham, PRESTON PR1 9AN
 Tel: 01772 748547

www.prestonarts.com

WE'RE BACK!

Some of our readers will have noticed that the *December - February* edition didn't appear and might have assumed we'd gone out of business. In fact, PAA has been undergoing a little review and re-organization, which has led to the News being put on the back burner. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Chair, **Rachelle Panagarry**, and to all new committee members.

Now that we have a little more stability, we've turned our attention back to the News and realized that the deadline for the *March - August* edition was imminent. That explains why we didn't ask for contributions. Instead, we've put together a few articles which are of overall interest. However, we have received two submissions, and are delighted to include those.

The What's-On Guide is often incomplete and inaccurate, especially at this time of year when the News covers 6 months. So, we are experimenting by leaving it out and asking users to check the various members' websites (which we have included) for details of forthcoming events. If this does not go down well, we will restore the more usual format next time.

Hopefully, we will be able to return to our usual publication dates, so we will be issuing reminders later in the year for contributions to the next edition. Please note the editor's new email address: vsmith3011@outlook.com VS

SOUTH RIBBLE STRINGS

South Ribble Strings (SRS) is a string orchestra made up of violins, violas, cellos and double bass. Founded in 2015, it plays concerts all around our area. The most recent was a Christmas concert on 2nd December at Chorley. As Chorley is my hometown, I was disappointed not to be able to attend, but from comments on Facebook, it went down well. How could it fail, with a programme that included Holst's *St Paul's Suite*, Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* and Sibelius' *Andante Festivo*!

At PAA, we had personal experience of their quality when they played the finale of last year's Festival Launch in St George. That concert had as its principal item, **The Forest of Bowland Suite** by Christopher Gibbs. Chris was one of our guests of honour for the Launch. He gave us a short introduction to the piece and indicated that e.g. in the tea shop movement, he had tried to suggest the tinkling of teacups. I wasn't sure that I quite picked that up, but the movement certainly created for me the atmosphere of an olde world tea shop of the kind I seek out wherever I go. A few memorable examples from recent years include *The Bridge* at Bradford-on-Avon, *Bumbles* in Chichester, *The Old York* in York, and *Bolton-by-Bowland* in Bowland – is that the one that inspired Chris, I wonder?



SRS describe themselves as “a friendly bunch, with a combination of amateurs and professional musicians from the local area. We meet 2 or 3 times a month to build our skills (did you know that there are at least 25 different ways you can use a bow?) and play some of the fantastic music written for string orchestra”. For further information about them and to see a very impressive list of the pieces in their repertoire, see their website at southribblestrings.weebly.com. VS

PRESTON ARTS NEWS

Produced by Preston Arts Association.

Copies are available free of charge from local libraries, local arts societies, at the Guildhall, Travel Information Office in the Bus Station, Waterstones Bookshop, Alston Hall and other arts venues in the area.

Information and any news items should be sent to Vincent Smith 13 Woodford Copse Chorley PR7 2ER Email: vsmith3011@outlook.com

The next issue will cover the period September - November 2024

Deadline for submissions July 31st 2024

MEMBERS

Artfull

<https://artfullcomarts.org>

Broughton Club Players

<https://www.facebook.com/p/The-Club-Players-at-Broughton>

Broughton Players

<https://www.broughtonplayers.co.uk>

Company of Voyces

<https://www.facebook.com/Companyofvoyses>

Damson Poets

<https://damsonpoets.wordpress.com>

Dean Taylor

<https://deantaylortheatre.co.uk>

Fired 4 U

<https://fired4u.co.uk>

Friends of Winckley Square

<https://www.winckleysquarepreston.org/about/friends>

Gujurat Muslim Welfare Society

Hall Players

<https://www.hallplayers.org.uk>

Joyce Tindsley

<https://joycetindsley.com>

KTB Music

<https://www.ktbmusic.com>

Longton Players

<https://www.facebook.com/TheLongtonPlayers>

New Longton Artists

<https://newlongtonartists.com>

One Voice Community Choir

<https://www.onevoice.org.uk>

Preston & District U3A

<https://u3asites.org.uk/preston/welcome>

Preston Art Society

<https://prestonartsociety.weebly.com>

Preston Card Makers Club

Preston Cecilian Choral Society

<https://www.cecilians.org.uk>

Preston Circle Dance Group

<https://www.facebook.com/prestoncircledancing>

Preston Drama Club

<https://www.prestonplayhouse.co.uk/preston-drama-club>

Preston Flute Group

<https://prestonflutegroup.co.uk>

Preston Folk Dance Club

<https://www.prestonfolkdanceclub.org.uk>

Preston Friends of the Phil

Preston Gilbert & Sullivan Society

<https://prestongass.co.uk>

Preston Historical Society

<http://www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk>

Preston Lacemaking Group

Preston Movie Makers

<https://www.facebook.com/p/Preston-Moviemakers>

Preston Opera Company

<http://www.prestonopera.org.uk>

Preston Orpheus Choir

<https://www.prestonorpheuschoir.org>

Preston Photographic Society

<https://www.prestonphotographicsociety.org>

Preston Poets

<https://prestonpoetsociety.wordpress.com>

Preston Recorded Music Society

Rawstorne Singers

<https://www.rawstornesingers.co.uk>

Royal Preston Morris Dancers

<https://royalpreston.weebly.com>

South Ribble Strings

<https://southribblestrings.weebly.com>

St Andrew's & Tanterton Allsorts

St Leonard's G&S Society

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Utopial>

UCLAN Confucius Institute

<https://www.uclan.ac.uk/centres/confucius-institute>

PRESTON ORPHEUS CHOIR

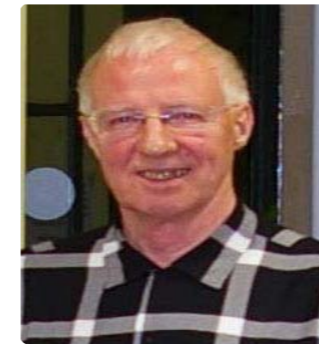
December was a busy month for Preston Orpheus Choir, with a wonderful Christmas concert with Freckleton Brass Band at St Michael and All Angels church in Ashton on Ribble, as well as carol singing at Rufford Old Hall. We are looking forward to our next concert under the baton of Dan Adams, entitled "Gloria". This will take place on Saturday 13th April at 7pm at one of our favourite venues, St Michael and All Angels church, 2 Egerton Road, Ashton on Ribble. The programme includes Poulenc's emotional and exuberant "Gloria" and Dvorak's electrifying "Te Deum".

Dvorak's Te Deum is one of his most striking works, written just before his departure for the New World. He had been asked to compose a new piece with which to introduce himself, preferably a cantata using a text his host promised to provide. Unfortunately, the words didn't arrive in time, so Dvorak used an old Latin hymn. Although written in Czechoslovakia, he managed to incorporate some US influences, based on the very limited experience he had of hearing American music. The premiere was held in Carnegie Hall in October 1892, 4 weeks after Dvorak's arrival in New York.



The concert features talented soloists Aimée Maria Harris (soprano) and Connor Cobb (bass) alongside our brilliant accompanist Paul Greenhalgh.

Our summer concert, a programme of light music, will take place on Saturday 1st June, venue to be confirmed. Tickets will be on sale from our website where you can also find information on joining Preston Orpheus Choir. We are a friendly group of singers of all ages, and we always welcome new members. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 to 9.30pm at St Pius X Catholic Preparatory School, 200 Garstang Road, Fulwood. If you're interested in joining us but would like to "try before you buy", why not give our "3 for free" offer a go? Come along to three rehearsals free of charge before you make up your mind. We'll make sure you're looked after by someone who sings the same voice part as you and if you're not sure what that voice part is, don't worry, we'll sort that out for you! Contact us via our website www.prestonorpheuschoir.org to ask any questions or let us know you'll be coming. We look forward to welcoming you. **CJ**



Graham Jackson (1943 -2024)

Graham was a dedicated local musician all his life. He was an excellent pianist, but his other musical activities were considerable; he accompanied the Preston Cecilian Choir and Lytham St. Annes Choral Society, gave musical presentations, and

was well-known throughout the area for his activities in other fields of music. For instance, he participated several times in the Preston Arts Festival. On one occasion he gave a half hour recital during the Arts Festival Launch concert and on another agreed to accompany Young Musician of the Guild, Andrew Reynish in Grieg's Cello Sonata in A minor. The accompaniment turned out to be ferocious and Graham had only a week to learn it, but he turned in a flawless performance. He was also Chairman of Preston Recorded Music Society for quite a few years, as well as giving annual presentations at both Preston and Blackpool Recorded Music Societies. Most years the Music and Poetry Societies held joint meetings in which he unfailingly participated and was generous in his appreciation of the contributions of others. He was also adept at making arrangements of works to suit an occasion or a combination of instruments, and he composed works of his own. I particularly remember one of his compositions – The Spirit of Life, which consisted of 15 sections each introduced by suitable poems or literary extracts which Graham had himself selected. With a couple of performances scheduled, he asked if I could find one male and two female voices to read the literary introductions. I suggested three members of the Preston Poets' Society and they all enjoyed and appreciated the experience. He was a thoroughly decent man, who many of us will look back on with great affection and warmth.



Harold Salisbury (1931–2024)

Legendary local jazz musician Harold Salisbury has died at the age of 92. On Facebook, his family said "We are very sad to announce that our dad Harold Salisbury passed away last week

after a short illness. His work embraced most forms of jazz from New Orleans to Contemporary, in a wide range of venues which included London's iconic Ronnie Scott's.

He had a very long career playing clarinet, saxophones and flute, sometimes more than one at the same time. He played alongside many famous names including Nat Gonella, Kenny Ball, Bruce Adams and Tim Garland.

PAA committee Festival organizers considered ourselves fortunate to secure his services for the Arts Festival Launch in April of last year. Unfortunately, he became too ill to perform, but we were delighted when he was strong enough to put in a cameo appearance and we were able to present him with a little gift to accompany our thanks for all he had done for jazz and for Preston. He will be much missed

Preston Opera

Preston Opera performed a wonderful concert in December 2023, celebrating the "Joys of Operetta" under the baton of the celebrated conductor and music director Helen Harrison and accompanied by the talented pianist Nathan Smith. This presentation followed the hard work of all, especially the Chorus Master Kevin Matthews. The soloists were exceptionally talented and well supported by the ensemble.

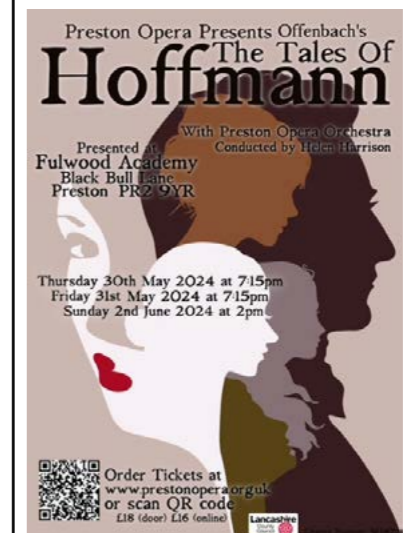
Anyone interested in experiencing an opera rehearsal, please join us at Carey Baptist Centre, Pole Street, Preston. PR1 1DX on a Thursday evening starting at 7.30 pm.



The Mayor of Penwortham - Ian Watkinson. The accompanist - Nathan Smith (left), Musical Director - Helen Harrison (centre). Chorus Master - Kevin Matthews (next to the Mayor). The 9 Soloists. Sue Rice (right). Photograph by Michael Akers.

Preston Opera's next production is **The Tales of Hoffmann**. Here's our poster, with details of dates and times.

The Tales of Hoffmann was Offenbach's last work and after around 100 operettas, was his only true full-scale opera. It tells of Hoffmann's three weird



love affairs in which his heart is broken each time. The first turns out to be a mechanical doll (shades of Coppelia), the second in thrall to a magician, and the third a consumptive who is tricked into singing one last deadly time. In the epilogue, Hoffmann himself collapses and dies. There is an

echo of Offenbach's own life here. Whilst reading through his score, he had a fatal seizure, a few months before the opera's premiere.

We hope to see you there. **GB/SR**

WORDS AND MUSIC - Two of our oldest societies

Here are a few words about the history of two of PAA's oldest groups, the Poets' and Recorded Music Societies.

Preston Poets' Society

The Preston Poets' Society was formed in 1947 and is thus heading towards its 80th Anniversary. After Gold, Diamond, Blue Sapphire and Platinum, Oak seems a bit of a let-down, but that is apparently what an 80th anniversary is called. The founder member was the quaintly named Aloysius Hubbersty but we know nothing about him apart from his name. Thanks to the longevity and unflagging enthusiasm of its leaders, we have (I believe) had only four Presidents in 77 years – Charles McKenzie, Edna Bates, Edwina Dixon, and Yours Truly. If I survive to the Oak Anniversary and am not subjected to a coup, the Society's Oak will correspond with my Pearl Anniversary as President.

The first venue was famously the back of a grocer's shop in Preston. By the time I joined (1992), we were in a room in St Columba's on Deepdale Road. Over the years, we had to move several times but are now in what we hope will be a permanent settlement at St Wilfrid's.

We are fundamentally a poetry appreciation group, unlike Damson Poets, which is the other main poetry group in Preston and is for performance poetry. We have four competitions per year, two with given themes and two open. The intention of these was to encourage members to write new work, although it is not uncommon for members to raid their back catalogues. Other evenings are devoted to a variety of activities, including having a guest speaker, or reading members' poems. An innovation in recent years has been to devote two evenings to Poets' Projects, in which a theme is given, with members invited to choose



an appropriate poem which they can read at the meeting together with a short account of why it was chosen. Other innovations have included the introduction of a triannual Newsletter, and a joint meeting with the Recorded Music Society in which participants choose a poem and a piece of music, both of which fit a given theme. One other successful experiment has been the introduction of an annual summer outing, to a place of literary or artistic interest. Our visits have included to Wordsworth links in Grasmere, Rydal Mount and Hawkshead, Haworth (Bronte interest), and Brantwood (Ruskin). We also visited Stonyhurst College. The picture shows the group in the library there, where we were shown and allowed to handle a copy of the First Folio of Ben Jonson published in 1616.

Membership has had its ups and downs, but at the moment we have a group of around a dozen members who regularly attend, and a small handful of pen members.

Preston Recorded Music Society

My thanks to Jim Westhead for supplying some of the early history. The society was founded around 1959 and was initially called the Preston Gramophone Society. Its equipment was purchased by a wealthy resident of Leyland who was fanatical about records and had a standing arrangement with a shop in Leyland to reserve every new Stereo LP that came out. The first meetings took place in rooms above the Conservative Club at the junction of Fishergate and Church St. Several alternative venues followed, culminating in a long-term residence at the Oddfellows Hall, Friargate. When Jim joined, in 1975, the membership stood at about 30.

It gradually faltered and seemed to be on the verge of collapse, when Harry Shorrock, who had been in at the beginning, reappeared one night with his friend Kevin Pendlebury. I knew Kevin as he worked, like me, at BAe on Strand Road. Our paths occasionally crossed. It was Kevin who recruited me, having spotted me at a Halle



Concert one evening. He was very enthusiastic and accepted the offer to be Secretary, a role I now hold (small world!). He took to it like a duck to water. In my first visits during the 1980's, Harry (sadly no longer with us), Jim, Kevin and I would often go for a restaurant meal on Friargate after the session. Due to Kevin's unflagging vigour, the Society flourished and achieved a membership of over 40, meeting every Friday night throughout Autumn, Winter and Spring. Kevin was not afraid to knock on doors in his efforts to promote the society. That included the chief conductor of the Liverpool Phil, the late, great Libor Pesek, who was persuaded to give us a programme of music. He seemed impressed by the format of our society and came another three times. The photo shows Libor on the right, with Antony Lewis-Crosby (CEO of the Phil at the time) in the centre. We have had many other guest presenters, including pianists Kathryn Stott and Martin Roscoe.

I reciprocated Kevin's recruitment of me by inviting him to join the Poets. He did, and brought with him his customary enthusiasm and foresight. It was he who first hinted to me about introducing a newsletter and having joint meetings between poets and musicians. Both have been great successes ever since. Kevin died suddenly and unexpectedly in 2000, at the age of 58. Alas with the loss of his drive, the society faltered again, and eventually nearly collapsed. The problem was that nobody wanted to be on the committee, but in the nick of time, Jim, Mike Cracknell and I came to the rescue. This was 2018. After a shaky start, and with meetings reduced to once per month, we have enjoyed a small resurgence. We now meet on the second Friday of each month, at the Penwortham Over 60's Club. **VS**