

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY



Johannes Brahms

A German Requiem

Holly Teague – Soprano

Peter Edge – Baritone

Christopher Symons – Piano

Simon Russell – Piano

John Naylor – Conductor

St Mary's Church, Nantwich

Saturday 12 November 2022

Chairman's Welcome

Good evening, and on behalf of Nantwich Choral Society may I give you a very warm welcome to this evening's performance. At the start of this our 50th anniversary year we are delighted to look forward to another full year of music making.

We would also like to welcome our two soloists tonight, Holly Teague and Peter Edge, as well as our guest pianist Christopher Symons. Special thanks must go to our resident pianist Simon Russell, who does such a magnificent job of accompanying us at our weekly rehearsals, and to our musical director John Naylor for his unfailing cheerfulness in leading us through the intricacies of each new piece of music.

As always thanks must go to Nantwich Town Council and to the Harding Trust for their continued financial support over the years which helps us to stage events such as these. We are also very grateful to Cheshire East Library service, who are unfailingly helpful in supporting us to source and borrow musical scores for our concerts. Thanks must also go to the Rector and staff at St. Mary's for their continued help and support in hosting our concerts.

Finally of course I would like to thank you our audience for your continued support and attendance, and we look forward to welcoming you again in December for our traditional Christmas carol concert. We are always on the lookout for new members, and would be delighted to welcome you to our Wednesday rehearsals.

Graham Harbage

Chairman, NCS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nantwich Choral Society gratefully acknowledges the support during the recent past from The Harding Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, Cheshire Libraries, Mornflake and other advertisers in our programme, sponsors and donors.



Program

Piano solo Brahms – Rhapsody op79 no. 2 in G minor Christopher Symons

Soprano solo Schumann – Widmung Holly Teague
Accompanist: Christopher Symons
Brahms – Wir Wandelten
Brahms – Meine Liebe ist Grün

Baritone solo Brahms – Denn es gehet Peter Edge
Accompanist: Simon Russell
Brahms – Botschaft
Schumann – Die Beiden Grenadiere

Pause

Choir Brahms – A German Requiem

Song Texts

Widmung

Du meine Seele, du mein Herz,
Du meine Wonn', o du mein Schmerz,
Du meine Welt, in der ich lebe,
Mein Himmel du, darein ich schwebe,
O du mein Grab, in das hinab
Ich ewig meinen Kummer gab!
Du bist die Ruh, du bist der Frieden,
Du bist vom Himmel mir beschieden.
Dass du mich liebst, macht mich mir wert,
Dein Blick hat mich vor mir verklärt,
Du hebst mich liebend über mich,
Mein guter Geist, mein bess'res Ich!

Wir Wandelten

Wir wandelten, wir zwei zusammen;
Ich war so still und du so stille;
Ich gäbe viel, um zu erfahren,
Was du gedacht in jenem Fall.
Was ich gedacht—unausgesprochen
Verbleibe das! Nur Eines sag' ich:
So schön war Alles, was ich dachte,
So himmlisch heiter war es all.
In meinem Haupte die Gedanken
Sie läuteten, wie goldne Glöckchen;
So wunderschö, so wunderlieblich
Ist in der Welt kein andrer Hall.

Junge Lieder I: Meine Liebe ist grün

Meine Liebe ist grün wie der Fliederbusch
Und mein Lieb ist schön wie die Sonne;
Die glänzt wohl herab auf den Fliederbusch
Und füllt ihn mit Duft und mit Wonne.
Meine Seele hat Schwingen der Nachtigall
Und wiegt sich in blühendem Flieder,
Und jauchzet und singet vom Duft berauscht
Viel liebestrunkene Lieder.

Dedication

You my soul, you my heart,
You my rapture, O you my pain,
You my world in which I live,
My heaven you, to which I aspire,
O you my grave, into which
My grief forever I've consigned!
You are repose, you are peace,
You are bestowed on me from heaven.
Your love for me gives me my worth,
Your eyes transfigure me in mine,
You raise me lovingly above myself,
My guardian angel, my better self!

We Walked

We were walking, we two together;
I so silent and you so silent;
I would give much to know
What you were thinking then.
What was I thinking—let it remain
Unspoken! One thing only I shall say:
All my thoughts were so beautiful,
So heavenly and serene.
The thoughts in my mind
Chimed like golden bells:
So wondrously sweet and lovely
Is no other sound on earth.

Song of Youth I: My love is as green

My love's as green as the lilac bush,
And my sweetheart's as fair as the sun;
The sun shines down on the lilac bush,
Fills it with delight and fragrance.
My soul has a nightingale's wings
And sways in the blossoming lilac,
And, drunk with fragrance, exults and sings
Many a love-drunk song.

Denn es gehet dem Menschen

Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh;
wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er auch;
und haben alle einerlei Odem;
und der Mensch hat nichts mehr denn das Vieh:
denn es ist alles eitel.

Es fährt alles an einen Ort;
es ist alles von Staub gemacht, und wird wieder
zu Staub.
Wer weiß, ob der Geist des Menschen aufwärts
fahre,
und der Odem des Viehes unterwärts unter die
Erde fahre?

Darum sahe ich, daß nichts bessers ist,
denn daß der Mensch fröhlich sei in seiner
Arbeit,
denn das ist sein Teil.
Denn wer will ihn dahin bringen, daß er sehe,
was nach ihm geschehen wird?

Botschaft

Wehe, Lüftchen, lind und lieblich
Um die Wange der Geliebten,
Spiele zart in ihrer Locke,
Eile nicht, hinwegzufliehn!
Tut sie dann vielleicht die Frage,
Wie es um mich Armen stehe,
Sprich: „Unendlich war sein Wehe,
Höchst bedenklich seine Lage;
Aber jetzo kann er hoffen
Wieder herrlich aufzuleben,
Denn du, Holde, denkst an ihn.“

Die beiden Grenadiere

Nach Frankreich zogen zwei Grenadier',
Die waren in Russland gefangen.
Und als sie kamen ins deutsche Quartier,
Sie liessen die Köpfe hangen.

For that which befalleth the sons of men

For that which befalleth the sons of men
befalleth beasts;
as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
yea, they have all one breath;
so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a
beast; for all is vanity.

All go unto one place;
all are of dust, and all turn to dust again.
Who knoweth the spirit of man [...] goeth
upward
and the spirit of the beast that goeth
downward to the earth?

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing
better,
than that a man should rejoice in his own
works,
for that is his portion.
For who shall bring him to see what shall
happen after him?

A Message

Blow breeze, gently and sweetly
About the cheek of my beloved,
Play softly with her tresses,
Make no haste to fly away!
Then if she should chance to ask
How things are with wretched me,
Say: 'His sorrow's been unending,
His condition most grave;
But now he can hope
To revel in life once more,
For you, fair one, think of him.'

The two Grenadiers

Two grenadiers were marching back to France
They had been held captive in Russia,
And when they reached German lands
They hung their heads in shame.

Da hörten sie beide die traurige Mär:
Dass Frankreich verloren gegangen,
Besiegt und geschlagen das tapfere Heer—
Und der Kaiser, der Kaiser gefangen.

Da weinten zusammen die Grenadier'
Wohl ob der kläglichen Kunde.
Der eine sprach: „Wie weh wird mir,
Wie brennt meine alte Wunde!“

Der andre sprach: „Das Lied ist aus,
Auch ich möcht mit dir sterben,
Doch hab' ich Weib und Kind zu Ha
Die ohne mich verderben.“

„Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind,
Ich trage weit bess' res Verlangen;
Lass sie betteln gehn, wenn sie hungrig sind—
Mein Kaiser, mein Kaiser gefangen!

„Gewähr mir, Bruder, eine Bitt':
Wenn ich jetzt sterben werde,
So nimm meine Leiche nach Frankreich mit,
Begrab mich in Frankreichs Erde.

„Das Ehrenkreuz am roten Band
Sollst du aufs Herz mir legen;
Die Flinte gib mir in die Hand,
Und gürt mir um den Degen.

„So will ich liegen und horchen still,
Wie eine Schildwach, im Grabe,
Bis einst ich höre Kanonengebrüll
Und wiehernder Rosse Getrabe.

„Dann reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab,
Viel Schwerter klirren und blitzen;
Dann steig ich gewaffnet hervor aus dem Grab—
Den Kaiser, den Kaiser zu schützen!“

For here they learnt the sorry tale
That France had been conquered in war,
Her valiant army beaten and shattered,
And the Emperor, the Emperor captured.

The grenadiers then wept together,
As they heard of these sad tidings.
The first said: 'Ah, the agony;
How my old wound is burning!'

The second said: 'This is the end;
If only we could die together.
But I've a wife and child at home,
And they would perish without me.'

'To hell with wife, to hell with child,
My aims are for far higher things;
Let them beg, if they've nothing to eat—
My Emperor, my Emperor captured!

'Grant me, brother, one request,
If I am now to die.
Take my corpse with you to France;
Bury me in French soil.

'You shall lay upon my heart
The Cross of Valour with its red ribbon;
And place my musket in my hand
And gird my sword about me.

'So I shall lie and listen
Like a silent sentry in my grave,
Until I hear the cannons' roar
And the horses gallop and neigh.

'That will be my Emperor riding by my grave;
Swords will be clashing and flashing;
And armed, I'll rise up from the grave
To defend the Emperor, my Emperor!'

English Translations © Richard Stokes

A German Requiem – Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

Even in his youth Brahms had been preoccupied with the idea of composing a Requiem, but only in 1866 when he was 33 (and still a relatively young man) did he begin serious work on it. It was completed the following year with the exception of the fifth movement. After the false start of a poor performance of three of the movements in Vienna in December 1867, Brahms himself took over as conductor and in its incomplete form *Ein Deutsches Requiem* was first heard in Bremen Cathedral on Good Friday 1868. The final version was performed in 1869 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the work was published in the same year.

Brahms may have written the *Requiem* in memory of his mother, who died in 1856; it is equally possible that he had in mind his great friend and mentor, Robert Schumann, whose madness and tragic death profoundly affected him. Schumann's widow Clara, with whom Brahms enjoyed a deep but probably platonic relationship, was of the opinion that the work was in memory of the composer's mother. However, it is probable that the chorus "All flesh is as grass" started life as part of an early sonata for two pianos that eventually became the D minor Piano Concerto, a work which we know was originally intended as a tribute to Schumann and begun in 1854 when Brahms moved to Düsseldorf to look after Clara and her seven children. Whilst the deaths of his mother and his friend influenced him profoundly, Brahms himself gave no indication of whose memorial the *Requiem* might be, if indeed it was any one person's.

Although it is not entirely clear what Brahms' religious views were, the title '*A German Requiem*', (referring to its language) reflects the fact that Brahms selected verses from the Lutheran Bible, one of his greatest influences, rather than employing the customary Latin. He compiled the text himself from both Old and New Testaments and from the Apocrypha to convey a humanist message with a focus on the living rather than the dead. The result has little in common with the conventional Requiem Mass, omitting as it does the horrors of the Last Judgement which are such a striking feature of the *Missa Pro Defunctis*, or any final plea for mercy or prayers for the dead. It also makes only a passing reference in the final movement to Christian redemption through the death of Jesus.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Brahms was content with the culture of Lutheranism but could not accept its dogma. So concerned was Reinthaler (Music Director at Bremen Cathedral) about the omission of overt Christian references that he took the liberty at the Bremen Cathedral performance of inserting the aria "I know that my Redeemer liveth" from Handel's *Messiah* with a view to satisfying the clergy.

So it is hardly surprising that the title of "Requiem" has at times been called into question. What is clear, is that Brahms was a deeply serious thinker with an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures. He proclaimed that he did not want to write a Requiem for the dead, but one to comfort the living, and it is in this context that the *German Requiem* needs to be considered. As far as the title '*a German requiem*' is concerned, Brahms told his friend Reinthaler that *German* refers primarily to the language rather than the intended audience and that he would have gladly called the work *A Human Requiem*. Years later, Brahms was quite moved when he discovered that Robert Schumann had planned a work of the same name.

Despite its unorthodox text, the work was immediately recognised as a masterpiece and as with all great music, the universal message of its vision transcends the circumstances of its conception.

The similarity of the opening and closing sections unifies the whole work, whilst the funeral-march of the second movement is balanced by the triumphant theme of the resurrection in the sixth. Similarly, the baritone solo in the third movement, “Lord, make me to know that the measure of my days is set”, is paralleled in the fifth by the gentleness of the soprano solo, “Ye now are sorrowful, but yet I will again behold you”. The fourth section, “How lovely are all thy dwellings fair”, therefore stands at the centre of the work, framed as it is by the solemnity of the first three movements and the transition from grief to the certainty of comfort in the last three.

This carefully balanced musical architecture is matched by an equally firm musical structure based on two principal themes which Brahms skilfully uses in a variety of subtle guises throughout the work. The most important of these is really a musical fragment rather than a fully-fledged theme. It occurs at the opening choral entry and consists of the first three notes sung by the sopranos to the words “Blest are they”. Brahms uses this musical cell as the main building block of the whole work, subjecting it to a variety of transformations, including an upside-down version and a back-to-front version, both of which play as significant a role as the original form. The other principal musical idea is a chorale-like melody (played by the violas in the orchestral version) at the very beginning. Its most obvious re-appearance is in the second movement, now in a minor key, as an expansive melody sung by the choir in unison.

What is so unusual about the work is that it combines classical counterpoint with romantic lyricism. There are superb, extended fugues (“And the ransomed of the Lord”, “For the righteous souls are in the hand of God”, and “Lord thou art worthy to gather praise and honour”), poignant romantic passages such as the soprano solo, and lush and inspiring melodies – “How lovely are thy dwellings”. Unlike most major choral works of the period, the voices never divide, staying in four parts throughout.

Brahms prepared an alternative version of the work to be performed by two pianists on two pianos. This version also incorporates the vocal parts, (suggesting that it could also be self-contained) and it is an authentically acceptable substitute accompaniment for choir and soloists in circumstances where a full orchestra is unavailable. The first complete (excepting the yet-unwritten fifth movement) performance of the *Requiem* in London was in July 1871 at the home of Sir Henry Thompson and his wife, the pianist Kate Loder who joined Brahms in playing the two piano accompaniment. It was sung in English.

It is Brahms’ masterly fusion of robust classical counterpoint and romantic lyricism, heard at its most visionary in *A German Requiem*, which has ensured the work’s enduring reputation as one of the supreme masterpieces of the choral repertoire.

TEXT

I

Blest are they that sorrow bear, for to
them shall be given comfort.

Matthew 5:4

They that sow lamenting shall reap a
joyful harvest.

Who goeth forth with weeping, and
beareth precious seed for sowing, shall
come home rejoicing and bring his
good sheaves with him.

Psalms 126:5-6

II

Behold all flesh is as the grass, and all the
goodliness of man is as the flower that
fadeth.

The grass is now withered and the flower
thereof is fallen.

1 Peter 1:24

Now therefore be patient, my dear
brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.
See how the husbandman waiteth for
the earth's precious fruit to ripen, and
long he waiteth with patience, until
the coming of morning rainfall and
evening showers.

James 5:7

But yet the Lord's word standeth for
evermore.

1 Peter 1:25

And the ransomed of the Lord shall
return with singing, unto Zion coming
rejoicing. Unending gladness forever
on their heads shall be. Pleasure and
gladness ever shall possess them, and
grief and sorrow, they shall vanish.

Isaiah 35:10

III

Lord, make me to know that the measure
of my days is set; that my life hath an
ending, and I must go hence.

Surely, all my days here are but a span
long to thee, and my whole life is as
naught to thee. Ah, as nothing every
man living, he trusts himself but vainly.
He walketh about as a shadow; he is
disquieted and is greatly troubled in
spirit; his riches, he knoweth not who
shall gather them.

Now Lord, wherein is my comfort? My
hope is in thee.

Psalms 39:4-7

For the righteous souls are in the hand of
God, and no more pain touches them
now.

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1

IV

How lovely are all thy dwellings fair, O
Lord of hosts!

For my soul now is yearning and longing
sore for the blest courts of the Lord;
my heart and flesh cry out for joy unto
the living God.

Psalms 84:1-2

How blest are they that in thy house are
dwelling; they give thee praise
evermore.

Psalms 84:4

V

Ye now are sorrowful, but yet I will again
behold you and then your hearts shall
be joyful, and this your joyfulness no
man taketh from you.

John 16:22

Now behold me: I had but for a little
while labour and trouble to bear, and
yet great comfort now I have found.

Ecclesiasticus 51:27

For I will comfort, like as a mother giveth
comfort.

Isaiah 66:13

VI

Here on earth have we no continuing
home, rather we seek one to come.

Hebrews 13:14

Lo, I will show unto you a mystery: we
shall not all slumber, but we shall all
be changed, in a moment, the
twinkling of an eye, at the sounding of
the last trumpet. Then the trumpet
shall be sounded, and the dead shall all
be raised up incorruptible, and we
shall all be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Then shall be fulfilled the word that is
written thus: Now death is swallowed
up in victory; Death, where is thy
victory? Hades, where is thy sting?

1 Corinthians 15:54-55

Lord thou art worthy to gather praise and
honour and power, for it is thou hast
all things created, and for thy will's
sake they are and have their being,
and were created.

Revelation 4:11

VII

Blessed are the dead, which in the Lord
are sleeping from henceforth: Yea,
saith the Spirit, they may rest now
from all their labours; their works shall
follow after them.

Revelation 14:13

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BIOGRAPHIES

HOLLY TEAGUE – Soprano

Soprano Holly Teague enjoys a varied stage career, often appearing as a soloist for symphonies, oratorio and sacred concerts across the UK, as well as gala evenings, recitals and new music projects. A versatile musician, she is as at-home with delicate 16th Century lute song as she is with Romantic Art Song, or 21st Century layered voice and electronics.

Shropshire-born, Holly has a particular interest in promoting classical music at home: as Artistic Director for UKAC Productions, she will present a second “Shrewsbury Proms in the Park” concert in June 2023 following its inaugural success at the county showground this summer, as well as performances of a new song cycle for voice and guitar by Martin Bussey, "A Shropshire Lass" which uses the words of Shropshire novelist and poet, Mary Webb.

In 2023, Holly looks forward to beginning the year with an “Opera Highlights” tour with Scottish Opera, return appearances with Cumbria Opera Group, and a recording release of Rameau for voice & organ with Edward Higginbottom at Keble Chapel, Oxford with CRD Records.

Holly studied at the Royal College of Music, London, CNSMD (Paris), and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, and over the years has been kindly supported by the Audrey Sacher Award, The Mario Lanza Trust, The Walker Trust, Help Musicians UK and The Countess of Munster Trust. She is a 2022 Josephine Baker Trust Artist, was a semi-finalist in the 2022 Kathleen Ferrier Competition at Wigmore Hall and the 2022 New Elizabethan Song Award and was the 2020 recipient of the St Clare Barfield Rosebowl for Operatic Distinction.

Holly splits her time as much as she can between London and Shropshire, where she enjoys spending time indoors with her cat, Roo, and outdoors with her very enthusiastic Border Collie rescue, Beau.

PETER EDGE – Baritone

Shropshire baritone Peter Edge graduated from the Royal College of Music, London, as a Master of Music in Vocal Performance with Distinction, where he was supported by the Walker Trust and tutored by Peter Savidge. Recent competition successes include winning the Chris Treglown Memorial Award and being joint winner of the 2020 John Kerr Award for English Song, as well as being runner-up in the Lesley Garrett Opera Prize and David Clover Singer’s Platform Recital Competition.

Recent opera roles include Schaunard in Puccini’s *La Boheme* and Afron in Rimsky Korsakov’s *The Golden Cockerel* with English Touring Opera, Le Dançaire and Chorus in Bizet’s *Carmen* with Longborough Festival Opera and Count Almaviva in Mozart’s *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Hampstead Garden Opera. Recently with the Monteverdi Choir, Peter has appeared in concerts at the Salzburger Festspiele, Philharmonie in Berlin, Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Royal Albert

Hall and St Martin in the Fields in London, Philharmonie in Luxembourg, Palau de la Música in Barcelona and Tonhalle in Zurich.

Peter returns to English Touring Opera in 2023; covering the role of Curio in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* and performing the roles of Petrucci in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and Gelsomino in Rossini's *Il Viaggio a Reims*.

CHRISTOPHER SYMONS – Piano

A Cornishman by birth, Chris spent a very happy childhood in Penzance, where his somewhat eclectic musical life centred round his grammar school, church choir and a rock 'n roll band called the 'Corals'. Classics at UCL was followed by four years teaching at Canterbury Cathedral Choir School, where, despite an apparent reluctance to do much practice, he was nudged through his ARCO by a redoubtable quartet – Dr Allan Wicks, Dr Philip Moore, Alan Ridout and his wife Fenella.

Moving to Oswestry in 1971 as Head of Classics at Oswestry School, he soon became widely involved in the area's music scene, as conductor, pianist and organist. As well as strong links with most of the local music organisations, he was for many years co-founder and Director of the popular Oswestry School Recital Series. As a happy bi-product of this he was fortunate enough to share many collaborative performances with a wide variety of wonderful musicians, including Martin Roscoe, John Lill, Tasmin Little, Laurence Jackson, Guy Johnston, Stephen Varcoe, James Gilchrist, the Skampa, and Allegri String Quartets, the European Union Chamber Orchestra (EUCCO) and Manchester Camerata. Recently he gave his fourth recital with James Gilchrist in Shrewsbury and performed the Elgar Piano Quintet with the wonderful young Gildas Quartet, and recently performed a Mozart concerto (K467) with the Shropshire Chamber Orchestra. He shares two duo partnerships, with Alison Loram (violin) and Sylvie Reverdy (cello).

SIMON RUSSELL – Piano

Simon was born in Liverpool. He studied organ at Birkenhead School with Timothy Lawford and then at Cambridge as Organ Scholar at St. Catharines's College, where he continued studies with Gillian Weir and the late Peter Le Huray. After Cambridge he was appointed Assistant Organist at Chester Cathedral but decided after a while to keep music as a hobby and gain fortune from computer keyboards.

He was firstly accompanist and then Music Director of the Hoylake Choral Society from 1982 until he moved, in 2000, to Nantwich where he is Organist at St Mary's Parish Church. He is an annual recitalist at Chester Cathedral and is on the 'reserve' organist list covering holiday periods and other absences. He is also in demand as an organ tutor and has many Associated Board and other pupil distinctions and diploma successes to his credit.

Simon is currently the Northern Region Coordinator for the RSCM and enjoys a flourishing freelance programme as an organ recitalist in great demand.

Simon was appointed accompanist to Nantwich Choral Society in 2010.

JOHN NAYLOR – Conductor

As conductor, singer and organist, John combines extensive performance experience in world-class choirs with a lifelong passionate interest in choral music and its performance.

Following a successful business career, he now devotes most of his activities to conducting, choir development and church administration. His original training was as a choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge with the great Dr George Guest after keyboard studies with Conrad Eden at Durham Cathedral where he was a chorister (1957-61), a music scholarship at Rossall School and singing studies with Wilfrid Brown and Lyndon van der Pump from The Royal College of Music.

He subsequently became a professional member of the Chapel Royal Choir of St Peter ad Vincula at H.M. Tower of London and The Monteverdi Choir and Louis Halsey Singers, appearing at The Proms, The South Bank, and The Aldeburgh Festival and in numerous broadcasts and recordings.

John was appointed Music Director of Nantwich Choral Society in September 2005 for whom he has now conducted highly acclaimed performances of many of the works in the mainstream choral repertoire including *Elijah*, the *Dream of Gerontius*, *Verdi Requiem*, *Monteverdi Vespers*, the *Armed Man*, *The Peacemakers*, *Mozart Requiem*, *The Creation*, *The Seasons*, *Mass in Blue*, *Chichester Psalms*, *St Paul*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Petite Messe Solonelle*, *B minor Mass* and *St Matthew* and *St John Passions*.

John founded the Lydian Singers in 1980 (disbanded in 2021) who became one of the leading chamber choirs in the NW, and over 40 years sang in almost all the cathedrals in the UK. He also directs the Open University Chapel Choir whose visits in 2022 included St Mary's Edinburgh and Ripon Cathedrals. The choir will visit Blackburn and Bristol Cathedrals and Hexham Abbey in 2023.

In addition to his musical activities, John was a member of the General Synod (2015 – 2021) and has been Chairman of the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance since 2012. He is also Chairman of the Members of Three Spires Multi-Academy Trust and a Trustee of Shallowford House. He has recently been appointed Lay Canon at Lichfield Cathedral.

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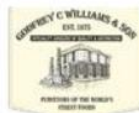


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