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**Newsletter 1, January 2021**

# HALIFAX

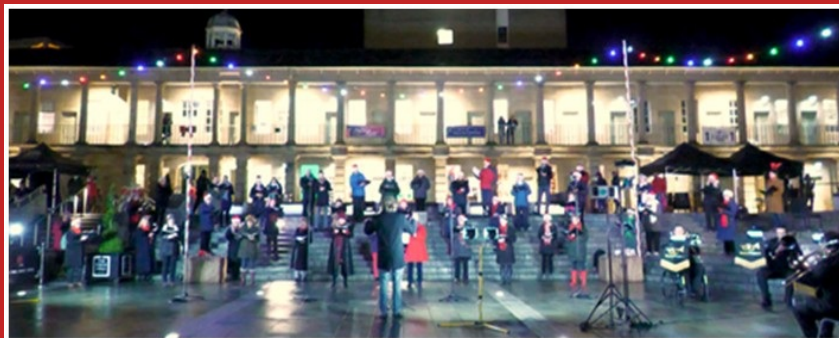
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## Choral Society

**The world's oldest choral society  
Making music continuously since 1817**

The past year has been a difficult one for choirs. After a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in March under the baton of our new Artistic Director, all our subsequent plans for concerts had to be cancelled. However, our singers were busy during lockdown earlier in the year with weekly online rehearsals. This was something of a learning curve but one the Choir was ready to embrace as it allowed us to carry on singing!

**Carry on singing!**



On Saturday 12th December the Choir recorded a Christmas video of Carols sung at Halifax's historic Piece Hall – accompanied by the Black Dyke Trombone Ensemble.

[Watch our performance here](#)

Not only that, we also produced a magnificent online performance of the famous chorus 'The Heavens are Telling' from Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*. Each singer contributed an individual performance,

recorded alone at home using an accompaniment recorded especially for the project by our accompanist, Jenny Martins. Special thanks are also due to Jenny for the careful work of combining the performances together to produce the final video, interspersed with fine views of Calderdale.

This was the very first work performed by the Society back in the spring of 1818.

[Watch the video here](#)

### **Introducing Philip Collin Conductor and Artistic Director of Halifax Choral Society**



Following the retirement of John Pryce-Jones in the autumn of 2019, the Society appointed Philip Collin to be our new conductor and artistic director in March 2020.

Philip Collin was Organ Scholar at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

He then took a post-graduate diploma in piano accompaniment at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he studied with John York while taking part in regular classes with Iain Burnside and Graham Johnson.

Since then he has worked extensively as a vocal coach, répétiteur, adjudicator, organist and conductor, and performed as a song accompanist throughout the UK and Europe.

As an accompanist he has been a champion of English song, twice performing the complete works of Gerald Finzi in 2006 (the fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death) and giving the first performance of many songs, most notably by Ian Venables and Elaine Hugh-Jones and some unpublished songs by Ivor Gurney.

He has had a varied career as a performer, including playing and singing on a number of pop recordings, playing the organ on the Academy Award-winning soundtrack to *Gravity* and piano on the 2014 film, *Fury*.

As a choral conductor, he has previously been Musical Director of Manchester Bach Choir, West Barnes Singers and Carshalton Choral Society and Director of Music at several churches, most notably St Peter's, Streatham, home of one of the finest church choirs in the country.

Since relocating from London to Yorkshire in 2017, he has been Musical Director of St Peter's Consort, one of Yorkshire's premier chamber choirs and Director of Music at St Matthew's, Carver Street, Sheffield as well as working as a full time maths teacher at UTC Sheffield.

**We would like to  
thank our patrons  
who have helped us**

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through this difficult  
period

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**David Trevor Shutt,  
Baron Shutt of  
Greetland, OBE, PC  
16 March 1942 –  
30 October 2020**

Our Chairman, Lord David Shutt of Greetland OBE, PC sadly died after a short illness in October 2020. He became our chairman on 8th March 2018 following the retirement of David Taylor who served in that position from 2004.

David was born in Farsley and attended Pudsey Grammar School. He trained as an accountant and worked at Bousfield Waite and Co in Halifax.

He joined the Liberal party in Pudsey as a teenager where he met and married Margaret. He was a Councillor in the Calder Valley for 25 years, and served as Mayor of Calderdale in 1982, being awarded the OBE in 1993 in recognition of his political and public service.

In 2000 he was made a life peer, and on entering parliament joined the Parliamentary Choir. He became government Deputy Chief Whip in the coalition government of 2010. This automatically made him, the "Captain of the Queen's bodyguard of the Yeoman of the guard" which gave him the opportunity to wear a very curious uniform including tights and spurs.

He had great amusement recalling the occasion when he was attending a state banquet at Windsor, for a sheik from the Emirates, when he went to change into his uniform, and upon opening the wrong door, encountered the rather shocked, but smiling, Queen. David was given no place to change after a sort of parade in the afternoon and therefore had to use the gents' toilets in the bowels of the castle. His colleague the Tory Chief Whip, Baroness Anelay (Joyce) was in similar difficulties. During David's efforts to extract himself from his uniform which took 30 minutes the Castle emptied and David and Joyce had to find their way out which is how they stumbled across the Queen who asked 'Are you lorrhst?' David had to return to his hotel to collect Margaret and to change into his white tie. They returned to the Castle and were announced prior to their presentation to Her Majesty, the Sheik, and assembled entourage. David approached Her Majesty and was greeted with 'Ha ha, I see you're not lorrhst now!'

David's Quaker faith and Liberal politics made him a natural choice as a director, and later Chairman of the Rowntree Trust which supported many local community resources.

I first met David in a formal capacity as Chair of the Northern Broadsides theatre company when I was also on the board. A man of not many words, he quietly listened to the discussion and wrote a few lines with his trusty fountain pen, succinctly summing up the discussion. He had to stand down from the position, and that of Chair of the Rowntree Trust when he became a government minister. David also became chair of the Elland Silver Band in the summer of 2018. His enthusiasm was infectious, and will be sadly missed, as will his taste for different, and often rather bright ties! He is survived by Margaret and his daughter Christine, sons Richard and Andrew, and six grandchildren.

**Roger Harvey OBE  
President, HCS**

## What next for Halifax Choral Society?

During this period of lockdown, normal rehearsals have been suspended, but we are meeting on zoom on Monday evenings with a view to producing a live-streamed performance of Duruflé's *Requiem* once Covid restrictions

have been relaxed a little.

## Amazing Musical Facts!

### Maurice Duruflé and Louis Vierne

Both men were great pillars of the French classical music scene in the 20th century – accomplished composers and consummate organists, though Duruflé was the junior by 30 years or so. Vierne had such regard for Duruflé that, in 1927, he chose the younger man to be his assistant at Notre-Dame, where Vierne was organist. The two enjoyed a close and enduring friendship.

On 2nd June 1937 Vierne gave an organ recital at Notre-Dame (his 1,750th !) with Duruflé at his side to set the stops. The younger man was also to play the second half of the concert. This was an illustrious occasion, a centrepiece for the 10th anniversary of the French organ association, Les Amis de l'Orgue - an audience of 3,000 had gathered for the concert. The first work was Vierne's own 'Triptyque pour Grand Orgue' and audience members reported that he played it 'as well as he has ever played'. This was to be followed by two sets of improvisations based on submitted themes. Vierne was getting ready to play the first improvisation when he suddenly declared to Duruflé that he felt ill. He collapsed at the console with one foot resting on a low E on the pedal board. After some delay Duruflé lifted the older man's foot away to silence the note – but Vierne (who had not been well) had died.

According to the records available Halifax Choral Society has performed a single work by Vierne on only two occasions, his *Messe Solennelle*. We performed Duruflé's *Requiem* on 13th November, 2009 at Halifax Minster.

### Paul Cairns

As a new venture, we would like to know if you have any suggestions on what you would like the Newsletter to include, which we hope to produce quarterly. We will certainly report on forthcoming events and review recent performances. Other items might include:

- 'I remember when ...' e.g. memories of past performances
- Amazing facts, e.g. about the music we are performing
- A 'where are they now' slot
- Pictures – do we have any cartoonists out there?

If you have any suggestions for what you would like your Newsletter to include, or any queries about HCS, please email

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