

# *perspectives*

CHELTENHAMARTSCULTURE

*Cheltenham Arts Council: awards\_funding\_publicity\_events listings*



*February - May 2025*

*Holst moves to Bloomberg app • Cantores Choir  
Gloucestershire Writers' Network  
The Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts*

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Please contact [editor@cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk](mailto:editor@cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk) for more information.

Submissions must be with us by the following dates for consideration

for the next issue:

Mid December deadline for Feb/May Issue

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COVER IMAGE: THEME 6 VARIATIONS, BRONZE RELIEF  
LOCATION: CHELTENHAM HOUSE, CLARENCE STREET  
GL50 3JQ  
DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH

YOU WILL NEED TO LOOK UP TO SEE THE WHOLE OF THIS  
MAGNIFICENT SCULPTURE BY BARBARA HEPWORTH.  
IT IS AT FIRST FLOOR HEIGHT ABOVE THE ENTRANCE  
TO WAGAMAMA – IT WAS COMMISSIONED IN 1970 FOR  
THE CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BUILDING SOCIETY'S  
NEW FLAGSHIP HEADQUARTERS. IN OCTOBER 2019,  
THE ARTWORK WAS LISTED BY HISTORIC ENGLAND TO  
PREVENT IT BEING REMOVED.



### PERSPECTIVES TEAM

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*Perspectives is produced three times a year.  
The next issue will span June – September 2025.*

**SUBMISSION (ADS AND EVENTS) MUST BE WITH US BY MID APRIL FOR CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEXT ISSUE. PLEASE EMAIL EVENT DETAILS TO [PERSPECTIVES.LISTINGS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PERSPECTIVES.LISTINGS@GMAIL.COM)**

## Dear Readers

Welcome to the February 2025 edition of Perspectives and my thanks to all who found time, in the busy pre-Christmas period, to send in such interesting articles, some looking back to the autumn and others full of the promise of good things to come.

As a Leckhampton resident, and one who thoroughly enjoyed the South Cheltenham History Festival at Bethesda church during Heritage Open Days last September, it is a pleasure to learn about the event from an organiser's point of view. It was indeed a perfect example of local co-operation, which deserves to be repeated, if possible.

Another event regularly relying on the input of numerous volunteers is the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, which will celebrate its centenary next year. In advance of this we can look forward to a new 'Young Performer Awards' evening, which will showcase the very best of the performances in all categories during the preceding days of the Festival. A date for the diary! The Gloucestershire Writers' Network also shares news of an initiative involving a specific category for young poets in their annual poetry and prose competition in 2025. As inspiration to budding poets! It is a delight to feature the moving pieces by the winners of last year's competition and to publicise the theme chosen for this year.

Yet another innovation is announced by the team at the Holst Victorian House; this time it involves the very latest digital technology. Do follow their advice to

check out the Bloomberg Connects app, offering access to a wealth of international museums and galleries, including Cheltenham's own much-loved Holst Victorian House.

This being Cheltenham, musical events are also well-represented in this edition. Looking back to December, Phil Aplin brings the spirit of Christmas humorously to life with Cleeve Chorale's increasingly desperate search for a Christmas baritone. Congratulations are due to the Italian Society for bringing an enjoyable, informative evening of Italian Opera to St Andrew's church, and to Tapestry Chamber Choir, with the New Choral Singers from The Hague, for their wonderful international concert of choral music at St Mark's church. There is also welcome news of a further choral treat from Cantores, offering a rare opportunity to hear music by Sir Hubert Parry and others, both at Highnam church and in Cheltenham in March.

From German Club to Scottish country dancing, and all of the topics in between, I hope you will find something of interest in this latest edition of Perspectives.

**Elise Forbes**  
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

[editor@cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk](mailto:editor@cheltenhamartscouncil.co.uk)

## CANTORES CHAMBER CHOIR OFFER A RARE MUSICAL TREAT

### PARRY, HIGHNAM AND THE SONGS OF FAREWELL

**S**ir Hubert Parry became a well-known public figure in his lifetime, celebrated as composer of the anthem *I was Glad for the Coronation of Edward VII* in 1902, and the song *Jerusalem*, written during the First World War, as well as numerous other works.

Because of his aristocratic background and inherited wealth, he was typically imagined as a conservative landowner and pillar of the establishment, but this was mistaken. Parry was a social radical with a secular and deeply humanitarian outlook. His wife was a fervent supporter of the suffragist cause, and in 1918, Parry was happy to dedicate *Jerusalem* to the Women's Movement. Although he gained recognition with public honours and titles, Parry was increasingly troubled, and sometimes depressed, as he grew older, particularly during the First World War. His family life brought much sadness and, as a great admirer of German culture, he was appalled by the horrors of the war.

The *Songs of Farewell*, completed in 1915, were Parry's last significant composition

and may be seen as a distillation of a lifetime's work and thought, as well as a commentary on the troubled years during which he worked on the songs. Sadly, Parry himself never heard the whole group of songs performed in his lifetime, and they are only rarely sung as a complete group today.

On 23 March 2025 Cantores Chamber Choir, directed by Simon Harper, will perform all the *Songs of Farewell* in the setting of Highnam Church, built and lavishly decorated by his father Thomas Gambier-Parry. This concert will be preceded by a talk on Parry given by Toby Thacker, who has worked with Parry's private papers, and written about his experience of the First World War.

On 30 March 2025 the choir will perform the *Songs of Farewell* in the church of St. Philip and St. James in Cheltenham, along with selected works by Stanford, Elgar, Holst, Frank Bridge, and Howells.

**Toby Thacker**

**Chairman, Cantores Chamber Choir**



SUSAN DURKIN - COS MEMBER  
(CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK)

## THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF PERFORMING ARTS

### INTRODUCING THE NEW YOUNG PERFORMER AWARDS 2025

In a town renowned for its festivals, 'The Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts' is Cheltenham's oldest, having first been staged in 1926. Now approaching its centenary, it continues to go from strength to strength, and in 2024 received over 2300 entries in over 300 classes, which are all organised entirely by the volunteers who run the festival.

For those unfamiliar with 'The Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts', it takes place each May at Cheltenham Town Hall. Young performers compete in classes covering dance, music, and speech and drama. Over nine days, the Town Hall is home to young dancers, singers, instrumentalists, actors, performance poets, mime artists, comedians and film makers, to name just a few of the classes available for young artists. In addition, there are classes which are open to anyone regardless of age, and the Festival concludes on a Saturday with its 'Choir Day', when both adult and junior choirs travel from all over the country to compete

against each other and, most importantly, to share their love of singing.

In 2025, 'The Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts' is delighted to be launching a new venture. Taking place on Friday, 16th May 2025 in the main hall, the festival will be holding its inaugural 'Young Performer Awards' evening, which is designed to celebrate the very best of the Festival. The performers who have achieved the highest marks in the dance, music, and speech and drama categories will be invited to perform in a showcase and compete for the accolade of winning one of the 2025 Young Performer Awards. This promises to be a fantastic celebration of the best young talent in the area. Entry for this evening will be free, and we would love to invite all 'Perspectives' readers to join us. For further information, please visit the Festival's website: [www.cfpa.org.uk](http://www.cfpa.org.uk). We look forward to seeing you in May!

**Jonathan Dyer**  
Vice Chairman

Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts



ZOE RUDIN - COS MEMBER  
([CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK](http://CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK))

[CHELTENHAM ARTS COUNCIL.CO.UK](http://CHELTENHAMARTS.COUNCIL.CO.UK)

## CHELTENHAM MUSIC FESTIVAL SOCIETY

### PITTVILLE PUMP ROOM YOUNG MUSICIAN CONCERTS

#### Pittville Pump Room Young Musician Concerts

Free Tuesday Lunchtime (1.00pm)  
Young Musician Concerts in Pittville Pump Room,  
arranged by  
the Cheltenham Music Festival Society,  
in collaboration with the Cheltenham Trust.

- 14 JANUARY *Rupert Egerton-Smith*  
RUPERT HAS JUST PERFORMED IN A GALA CONCERT IN THE CARNEGIE HALL, NEW YORK.
- 21 JANUARY *Balcarras School*
- 28 JANUARY *Ju Ju Dancers perform for Chinese New Year*  
WITH DEAN CLOSE SCHOOL
- 4 FEBRUARY *Stephen Selby* PIANO
- 11 FEBRUARY *Voilet Wong* (TRUMPET) & *Winnie Chan* (PIANO)
- 25 FEBRUARY *The Serinus Trio* (TWO FLUTES & PIANO)
- 4 MARCH *Eleanor O'Driscoll* (SOPRANO) & *Chloe Underwood* (PIANO)
- 18 MARCH *Nina Savicevic* (PIANO)
- 25 MARCH *Concert for Ukraine*
- 1 APRIL *Ivan Hovorom* (PIANO)

## CLEEVE CHORALE'S CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

### "THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS"

**O**n 7th December Cleeve Chorale held what we call our Christmas Celebration, which is a sequence of carols and readings.

Our MD, Dominic Hawley, had decided to include Vaughan Williams' 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols'; a good choice, we thought. We needed a baritone soloist, of course, and our first choice was unavailable, but Dom knew someone, who was duly engaged. A few weeks before the concert, it became clear that he was not going to be able to make it, but we still had plenty of time. We tried many other people, and by now time was definitely running out. Luckily our accompanist, Louis, had a well-qualified friend in Cardiff who would fill the bill and so, despite the cost of getting him to Cheltenham, we engaged him. At 11pm the night before the concert he informed us that he was unwell and couldn't perform, but not to worry, as he had found a substitute. This was Philip Lloyd-Evans, who has extensive opera experience, including

with the Welsh National Opera. We couldn't believe our luck!

And then came storm Darragh!

Philip was planning to drive from the Cardiff area, but first thing in the morning he was unable to get out of his village due to fallen trees. Thankfully these were cleared, and he managed to get to our rehearsal with time to spare.

The evening went extremely well, although audience numbers were slightly down due to the weather. A highlight was the rendition of John Rutter's 'Nativity Carol' by a choir of local A Level students led by Will, one of our tenors. Philip's singing was wonderful, and we are so grateful to him for stepping in and saving the day. As he said, he couldn't bear the thought of us spending weeks rehearsing and then not being able to go ahead. The true spirit of Christmas!

**Phil Aplin**  
Chair, Cleeve Chorale

**CLEEVE  
CHORALE**

Registered Charity no.284752



**Haydn's Nelson Mass and Vivaldi's Gloria**

Saturday April 12th 2025 7.30pm

St. Michaels and All Angels Bishop's Cleeve

<https://www.cleeve.chorale.co.uk>

## GERMAN CLUB EVENTS

### THE FIRST POLITICAL & CULTURAL TALKS OF THE SEASON

**F**or our first talk of the season we invited Angela Findlay, an Anglo-German artist, public speaker and trustee of the Dresden Trust.

She is also the author of 'In My Grandfather's Shadow'. Angela's topic was 'In My Grandfather's Shadow: working through Germany's WWII legacy'. In her talk, given in English, Angela explored what it means to be the granddaughter of a German Wehrmacht general and the importance of acknowledging the impact such a past can have both on a family and at national level. Carefully breaking the silence surrounding so many of the perpetrators during WWII, she challenged widespread binary narratives and showed how the arts have been used to process events, heal and learn the urgent lessons of history. Her talk was very well received and provoked many questions and much discussion.

Her first book, *In My Grandfather's Shadow*, was published by Penguin Transworld in July 2022.

For our second talk we invited Dr Ann Kennard who was a lecturer in German at UWE and until very recently the chair of the Bristol Hannover Council. Dr Kennard has a particular interest in nations and borders. The title of her talk, given in German, was 'The Border Areas of Central Europe: Regions of Historical Encounters'. Dr Kennard explored how the borders of Europe have changed time and again, and this is true of Germany as well as many other nations. Today's borders show a meeting of cultures which can be seen in various ways across the European nations. This talk again provoked many questions and discussion.



#### Our programme in 2025 includes the following talks

17th January: The Portrayal of the East German 'Province' in today's German literature by Professor David Clarke, Cardiff University

21st February: Beyond Nazis and Stasi? The cultural legacy of Germany in Great Britain since the year 2000 by Dr Debbie Pinfold, Bristol University

21st March: Farmers v Warriors: The Deep Past History of The German Language by Mike Phillips

11th April: The Mosel Camino by Greg Arnold

16th May: Gaps in German Memory relating to the First World War.

[Anne Gimingham](#)



# GLoucestershire Writers' Network

## POETRY AND PROSE COMPETITION

### 2024 WINNERS' EVENT AT THE CHELTENHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Winning Prose Piece	The Violet Letters, by Alfie Fox
Prose Runners-up	Mistral, by Georgia Boon Elements, by Jacob Parker Survivor Guilt, by Marilyn A. Timms
Winning Poem	Tent in Antarctica, by Marilyn A. Timms
Poetry Runners-up	Stormbound, by Liz Carew Rain on the Island, by Christine Griffin Reverberations, by Frank McMahon

Once again, the Gloucestershire Writers' Network had a wonderful response to our call out for entries to our annual poetry and prose competition on the theme of Weather, receiving entries from writers across Gloucestershire, who found a wealth of different ways to interpret the theme.

Entries were generally of a very high standard, nevertheless our poetry judge David Ashbee and prose judge Michael Johnstone rose to the challenge of choosing between them, to come up with the fantastic selection featured in our anthology. It was a great pleasure to be able to showcase the work of the winners and runners-up once again at our event held at the Queens Hotel, during the prestigious Times and Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival in October. The winning entries took us far and wide, from the Antarctic of Captain Lawrence Oates to a deluge on a tropical island, via a windswept Scottish coastline, showing us longed-for letters ruined by rain and letting us inside the head of a self-deluding skier. As varied as weather itself, the winning entries were insightful, tender, wry, evocative, sensual. We also heard selections of our judges' own work, adding up to a most



GLOS WRITERS' NETWORK WINNERS AND RUNNERS UP

enjoyable evening. The winners, runners-up and highly commended writers should all feel very proud of their achievements.

Next year the competition theme will be Edges, which lends itself to many different interpretations. The competition will open on 1 January 2025, and we are excited to read what Gloucestershire's writers will make of this theme. We have also introduced a new category and prize for the best poem by a 16-18-year-old.

Visit our website [www.gloswriters.org.uk](http://www.gloswriters.org.uk) for more information and to buy our anthology (back copies also available).

**Best wishes, the GWN Team**

The winning poetry and prose pieces are reproduced overleaf with the writers' permission and copyright remains with them.

## *The Violet Letters, by Alfie Fox*

I found George on his stoop, naked as the day he was born. The breeze was balmy and fragrant with the mineral scent of damp earth, each gust sending cascades of little droplets tumbling from the maple at the foot of the drive. He was hunched over the low table looking like an old oak stump with his tanned hide hanging in folds over his bony frame the way tree flesh might sag over a loop of biting wire.

'Lose at cards George?' I called out to him when I was within earshot, unable to help myself smiling at the scene, at his nakedness, the clear bright sun and the rain and the good things it meant for us out here. He didn't hear me, so I sidled up to the porch and attempted a nonchalant pose, leant against one post. 'Some storm,' I said, 'Lord knows we needed it'. He grunted, peaceably, and so I continued 'Caught you out in the field huh?'

'Fetching the mail,' he said.

'The mail?' I said, my eyes widening as the scene fell into place, 'Oh! It's come then?'

'Sure, it's come.'

'Well shit George, tell me! What's the news? How's your boy?'

'Come see for yourself,' he said, gesturing at the chair opposite him.

See, since George's boy had left he'd been waiting on a letter. Just something to let him know the kid was alive and that he'd done OK as a father and the poor old fool had been wasting away waiting for years now, although he'd never say as much. Now me and George go way back, we've been through a lot together, and I guess a part of me had been wasting away just the same, so when I saw the sheaf of letters laid out in front of him, delicately spaced so as no one sheet was touching the other, that part of me just about died, because the rain had ruined them.

They must have come in one of those airmail envelopes with the red and blue candy stripes because along the border of each sheet was a purple smear, fading on the inner sheets to the pale indigo that the sky sometimes gets to of an evening. Some of the pages were really pulped and illegible whilst the lilac sheets were just sodden, the ink all carved up by the runnels of rainwater so as only little islands of script remained and I knew at a glance that they would read like a half-remembered dream.

'Oh George,' I said, 'I'm sorry buddy,' and to my surprise he propped his grizzled head on my shoulder and wept, naked and leathery as some awful baby. I didn't mind, it was nothing I hadn't seen before. When he was done there were two wet spots on my shoulder, like I'd been standing beneath a gutter in need of mending and, thinking how what was good for the crops and the soil and the trees had just about ruined us, I said 'I'll go fetch us a drink'.

We spent the afternoon pouring through those letters, piecing together what we could. If the boy had written of anything meaningful, it was all lost. We read a little of the town he was living in, of a friend of his who he seemed sweet on, of jazz music that we didn't much understand, and some pretty radical politics that we understood even less. George spoke erratically, especially when the rum got lower in the bottle, about his wife, and the boy, and how he'd had to explain it to him when she died and something about the roles being reversed now. I think he was getting at the irony of it all, how he'd once explained death to a boy too young to spell his name and now, all these years later, he'd been hoping that the boy could explain life to a man too old to understand it. But I don't want to put words in his mouth.

Really, the evening turned out fine, with us drinking and the sun low and pink in the

sky where the clouds were whipped into a fine violet lace and George looking more dignified in an old sweater. 'What's next? For you I mean' I asked him. He sighed and

sat there a while, saying nothing whilst on the hills little green shoots were coming up anew, gleaming like jewels in a crown of dry yellow gold.

*Tent in Antarctica, by Marilyn A. Timms*

Reindeer-skin sleeping bags.  
A tent skewered to the ice.  
Blizzard roar swallowing words.  
Conversation impractical.  
The man hungers for home  
for frosty spring mornings laced  
with the first stirrings of warmth  
soft English drizzle to coax the snowdrops  
a rush of crocus, a hint of violets.  
Blue skies of April, a sneaky deluge  
and bright apology. Hat-stealing winds.  
Consolation of rainbows.

Hectic dance of summer flowers  
barley bristling as it ripens  
birds riding thermals before  
the thunderstorm unleashes hail  
the joy of petrichor.  
Golden days, eclipsed by  
searing heat in the second Boer War.

Autumn at Eton.  
A rain of horse chestnuts  
younger feet kicking a path  
through browning drifts of leaves.  
Mist rolling across a Sussex valley  
an opalescent goddess turning her  
platinum eyes on him.  
Hybrid skies - blue souvenirs of summer  
snowy clouds towing the dark-grey  
threat of winter. Late blackberries.  
Winter was always Christmas.  
Fairy lights and laughter, snow flurries  
that rarely built a snowman  
unfulfilled longings to sledge.  
A rare glimpse of the Aurora Borealis.

The man is sick of sledging  
of coming second in the race to the Pole.  
Mercury drops to minus forty.  
No way to spend a 32nd birthday.  
Scurvy, frostbite, hunger.  
Companions who refuse to abandon him.  
Captain Lawrence Oates  
officer and gentleman, opens the tent.  
'I am just going outside and may be some  
time'.

## EXCITING NEWS FROM THE HOLST VICTORIAN HOUSE

### NEW APP ON THE PRESTIGIOUS BLOOMBERG PLATFORM

**W**e, at the Holst Victorian House, are dedicated to celebrating the composer Gustav Holst, born here in 1874, and to providing an immersive experience of 1870s Cheltenham when his family occupied the house.

We use the latest technology to bring the stories to life, showing films about his music and influences, the story of the house through time, and a day in the life of a maid working in the house. We also display the original scores in our collection in a way that allows visitors to browse through them digitally and hear the music played simultaneously.

We are now very proud to have our own digital app on the global Bloomberg Connects platform. Please download it free from the App Store or Google Play and enjoy it before, during or after your visit or if you are unable to visit in person.

One of our key objectives is to make our collection more accessible and the app has built-in accessibility features including voice over, captions and audio transcripts, image zoom and font size adjustment. The app offers translation into 43 languages (and counting!).

The content, put together by our curator Laura Kinnear, includes:

- A welcome from the curator
- A short history of Pittville by Dr. Steven Blake
- Information about Gustav Holst's early life, family and career
- Features on each of the period rooms
- Volunteers talking about Victorian objects and proto-pre-Raphaelite paintings

- Jo Teague talking about a sampler from the nearby Cheltenham Female Orphan Asylum
- Stunning images taken by local company, Evenlode Films
- Our musical trustee, John Wright, talking about and playing Holst's piano
- PJ Crook talking about her Planets Celebration painting
- A map of the layout of the Grade II listed building
- Film clips, a link to Turning the Pages and Holst's scrapbook
- Information about learning sessions and how to support the Museum through volunteering, becoming a Friend or donating.

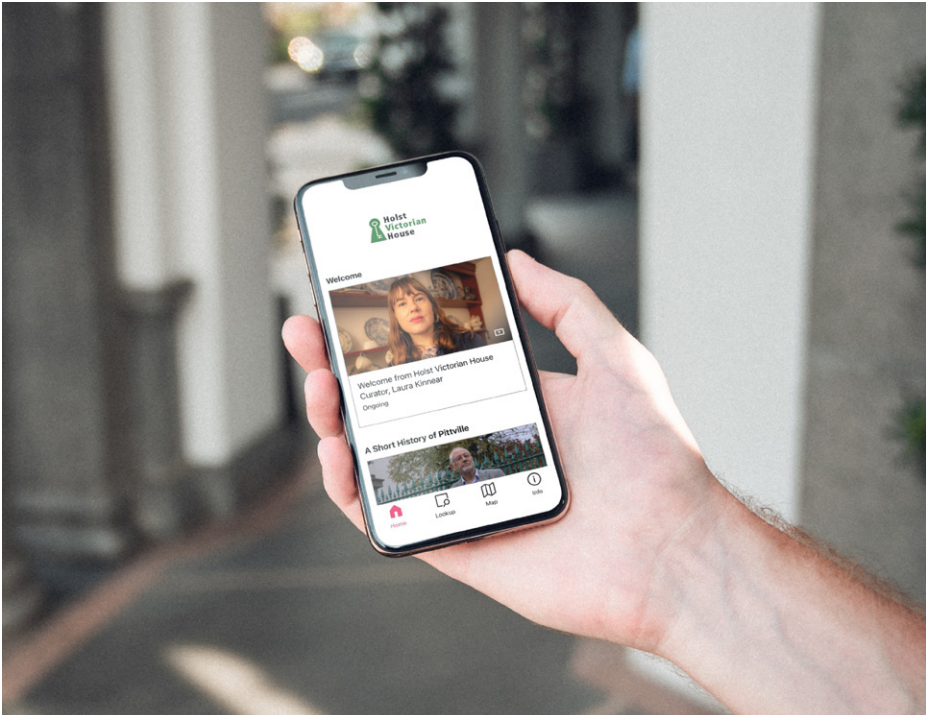
It's very exciting to see our museum 'cheek by jowl' on Bloomberg Connects with the New York Metropolitan Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Art UK, the American Museum in Bath and over 650 other museums, galleries, sculpture parks, gardens and cultural spaces all around the world. It's a great way to publicise the Holst Victorian House in the UK and internationally.

Please try the app, visit or re-visit Holst Victorian House and help us to enable this precious independent museum to remain open and continue to thrive.

**Martin Renshaw**  
Co-chair of the Holst Birthplace Trust



Bloomberg  
**Connects**



## LISTINGS: EVENTS DIRECTORY FEBRUARY - MAY 2025

## VISUAL ARTS

**AT THE GARDENS GALLERY,  
MONTPELLIER GARDENS:****Core Hours 10am - 5pm****The Journey: Cat Thorne  
and Tracey Connop**

Wed 5- Tue 11 Feb

**Clare Hines: Ebullience**

Wed 12- Tue 18 Feb

**Simon Probyn, Sculptor**

Wed 19- Tue 25 Feb

**Go with the Flow: Petya  
Stoeva**

Wed 26 Feb- Tue 4 Mar

**Wendy McKenzie**

Wed 5- Tue 11 Mar

**Near and Far, with Caroline  
Evans and Ellie Thomas**

Wed 12- Tue 18 Mar

**Jonathan Oakes**

Wed 19- Tue 25 Mar

**Tracy Hunt**

Wed 26 Mar- Tue 1 Apr

**Cheltenham Camera Club  
Annual Exhibition**

Wed 2- Tue 8 Apr

**Cheltenham Art Club****Exhibition**

Wed 9- Tue 15 Apr

**Jo Biggadike**

Wed 16- Sun 20 Apr

**Jazz Art Club**

Tue 29 Apr- Tue 6  
May, different artistic  
explorations of Jazz  
music, with Mike Bagshaw,  
Lloyd Wakeling, Andy  
Goodwin, Shaun Hughes,  
Jane Brighton and Jenny  
Westbrook

**How to Draw Time: Mina  
Stefanovic**

Sun 11- Tue 13 May

**Beginning Again: Sarah  
Granville**

Wed 14- Tue 20 May

**Cheltenham Group of  
Artists**

Wed 21- Tue 27 May

**Abigail Waddell**

Wed 28 May- Tue 3 Jun

## STAGE AND DANCE

**Charlton Kings Choral  
Society Rehearsals**

Wednesdays, 7.30pm,  
St Philip and St James,  
Leckhampton, further info:  
ckcsonline.org.uk

**Cheltenham Choral  
Society Rehearsals**

Wednesdays, 7.30-9.30pm,  
St Andrew's Church,  
Montpellier, welcoming  
new members, see  
cheltchoral.org for details

**Cleeve Harmony  
A Cappella Chorus  
Rehearsals**

Wednesdays, 7.30-10pm,  
Bishop's Cleeve Tithe Barn,  
new members welcome!  
See cleeve-harmony.org.  
uk or enquiries to md@  
cleeve-harmony.org.uk

**Musica Vera Rehearsals**

Wednesdays, 7.45-9.45pm,  
St Mary's, Prestbury,  
we have vacancies in  
all voice parts. Please  
email our secretary,  
Chris Carruthers, at  
4chriscrs@gmail.com for  
further information. See  
musicavera.org

**Young Musicians****Concert: Ju Ju Dancers  
perform for Chinese New  
Year with Dean Close  
School**

Tue 28 Jan, 1pm, Pittville  
Pump Room



DINNY POCOCK - DINNYPOCOCK.CO.UK

## EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY - MAY 2025



BERYL MORGANS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE GUILD

### Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: Peerless Partners

Sat 1 Feb, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, Rossini: Overture The Thieving Magpie, Schumann: Symphony No.4, Brahms: Double Concerto (Jack Liebeck - Violin, Raphael Wallfisch - Cello), Conductor - David Curtis. Tickets: [ticketsource.co.uk/cheltenham-symphony-orchestra](https://ticketsource.co.uk/cheltenham-symphony-orchestra)

### Young Musicians Concert: Stephen Selby (piano)

Tue 4 Feb, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room, arranged by the Cheltenham Music Festival Society, in collaboration with the Cheltenham Trust

### The Oriel Singers: Come and Sing

Sat 8 Feb, 10am-4.30pm, £30/£15, Bethesda Methodist Church, all-day workshop with Ben Sawyer, informal performance 4pm. Orlando Gibbons, Undine Smith Moore, William Harris, full details: [orielsingers.org.uk](https://orielsingers.org.uk)

### Young Musicians Concert: Violet Wong (trumpet) & Winnie Chan (piano)

Tue 11 Feb, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

### Young Musicians Concert: The Serinus Trio (two flutes & piano)

Tue 25 Feb, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

### Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra

Sat 1 Mar, 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, Conductor : Jonathan Mann, Violin soloist: Isaac Williams, Winner of Gloucestershire Young Musician of the Year 2023

### Young Musicians Concert: Eleanor O'Driscoll (soprano) & Chloe Underwood (piano)

Tue 4 Mar, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

### Young Musicians Concert: Nina Savicevic (piano)

Tue 18 Mar, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

### Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: The Wild Romantic

Sat 22 Mar, 7.30pm, Pittville Pump Room, R. Strauss: Don Juan and Four Last Songs, Mendelssohn: Symphony No.3 'Scottish', Hannah Davey - Soprano, Conductor - David Curtis. Tickets: [ticketsource.co.uk/Cheltenham-symphony-orchestra](https://ticketsource.co.uk/Cheltenham-symphony-orchestra)

### Young Musicians Concert: Concert for Ukraine

Tue 25 Mar, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

### Holst 150

A 150th birthday celebration event of the famous composer, Gustav Holst. Sat 29 Mar, 2pm - 5pm, (free, drop in concert and art activities) plus 7pm - 9pm, (concert, tickets available from [holstvictorianhouse.org.uk](https://holstvictorianhouse.org.uk)). Held at Pittville Pump Room

### Young Musicians Concert: Ivan Hovorum (piano)

Tue 1 Apr, 1pm, Pittville Pump Room

## EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY - MAY 2025

**Cheltenham Bach Choir: Glories of the Renaissance**

Sat 5 Apr, 7.30pm,  
Tewkesbury Abbey,  
cheltbachchoir.com

**Cheltenham Philharmonic Orchestra Spring Concert: Celebrating Folk and Legend**

Sun 6 Apr, 3pm, Princess Hall, Cheltenham Ladies College, Dvorak: Symphony No.8, Sibelius: En Saga, Dvorak: In Nature's Realm. Tickets will be available at [ticketsource.co.uk/cheltphilorch](https://ticketsource.co.uk/cheltphilorch)

**Cheltenham Choral Society Spring Concert**

Sat 12 Apr, St Philip and St James, Leckhampton, Mozart: Ave Verum Corpus, Schubert: Stabat Mater in G minor, John Sanders: The Reproaches, John Stainer: The Crucifixion, see [cheltchoral.org](https://cheltchoral.org)

**Cleeve Chorale Spring Concert**

Sat 12 Apr, 7.30pm, St Michael & All Angels, Bishop's Cleeve, Haydn: Nelson Mass and Vivaldi: Gloria

**Musica Vera Concert**

Sat 12 Apr, 7.30pm, St Mary's, Prestbury, Haydn: Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross, and choral works by Walton, Stainer and others. See [musicavera.org](https://musicavera.org)

**Cheltenham Chamber Orchestra**

Sat 10 May, 7.30pm, St Andrew's Church, Montpellier, Fauré, Poulenc, Delibes and John Frith, Conductor: Toby Purser, Leader and Violin Soloist: George Ewart



SUSAN WILKINSON - COS MEMBER ([CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK](https://chelttenhamopenstudios.org.uk))





SUSAN DURKIN - COS MEMBER (CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK)

### Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra: Dramatic Moments

Sat 17 May, 7.30pm,  
Pittville Pump Room,  
Tchaikovsky: Romeo  
and Juliet Overture,  
Arutiunian: Trumpet  
Concerto, Shostakovich:  
Symphony No.15, Alan  
Thomas - Trumpet, Guest  
Conductor - Michael Seal.  
Tickets: ticketsource.  
co.uk/cheltenhamsympho-  
nyorchestra

### Charlton Kings Choral Society

Sat 24 May, 7.30pm, St  
Philip and St James,  
Leckhampton, Elgar:  
Songs from the Bavarian  
Highlands, Sullivan: Trial  
by Jury, Bliss: O give  
thanks unto the Lord. ckc-  
sonline.org.uk

### STAGE & DANCE

#### Promenade Productions

##### Present: Snow White

Wed 19- Sun 23 Feb,  
Playhouse, traditional  
annual panto - an ideal  
fun boost for half term.  
Performance times and  
bookings at [www.chelt-  
playhouse.org.uk](http://www.chelt-playhouse.org.uk) or con-  
tact box office on 01242  
522852

#### Cheltenham Operatic and Dramatic Society

##### Presents: Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Tue 15- Sat 19 Apr, 7.30pm,  
2pm Thu and Sat matinee,  
Everyman, [codsonline.  
co.uk](http://codsonline.co.uk), box office 01242  
572573

#### Cotswold Savoyards:

##### Rock of Ages

Tue 6- Sat 10 May,  
Playhouse, [www.cheltplay-  
house.org.uk](http://www.cheltplayhouse.org.uk) or contact  
box office on 01242 522852

#### Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts

Fri 9- Sat 17 May, Town Hall,  
see [cfpa.org.uk](http://cfpa.org.uk)

## EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY - MAY 2025



TAMSSIN HYDE - COS MEMBER (CHELTENHAMOPENSTUDIOS.ORG.UK)

## LECTURES &amp; MEETINGS

**Cheltenham Local History Society**

Tue 4 Feb, 10.30am, St Luke's Hall, Jane Austen's Wills and Legal Puzzles, with Judge John Avery Jones

**Friends of The Wilson**

Tue 11 Feb, 2pm, members £11, non-members £13, St Matthew's Church, Celts to Carmelites: recent archaeological discoveries in Gloucester, with Andrew Armstrong. Booking at [friendsofthewilson.org.uk/events/](http://friendsofthewilson.org.uk/events/)

**The Arts Society Cheltenham: From Downton to Gatsby, jewellery and fashion from 1890 to 1929**

Tue 11 Feb, 7.15pm, members free, visitors £8, students £4, The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, For the series and film Downton Abbey, Andrew Prince was commissioned to make many jewels for the main characters and this inspired him to create a talk based on this unique period. See [theartsocietycheltenham.org.uk](http://theartsocietycheltenham.org.uk) or email [info.cheltenham@theartsociety.org](mailto:info.cheltenham@theartsociety.org)

**Cercle Français: L'Art Nouveau, Art Deco**

Mon 17 Feb, 7.30pm, St Luke's Hall, with Germaine Jones, see [cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk](http://cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk)

**Cheltenham Local History Society**

Wed 19 Feb, 7.30pm, St Luke's Hall, Sapperton, a Quiet Corner of Gloucestershire, with Alan Pilbeam

**Cheltenham German Club: Jenseits von 'Nazi und Stasi'? Das kulturelle Gedächtnis Deutschlands in Großbritannien seit dem Jahr 2000**

Fri 21 Feb, 7 for 7.30pm, The New Club, Montpellier Parade, with Dr Debbie Pinfold, Bristol University, in German, see [cheltgesell.uk](http://cheltgesell.uk)

**Cercle Français: Le Panthéon - aux grands hommes, aux grandes femmes, la reconnaissance française**

Mon 3 Mar, 7.30pm, St Luke's Hall, with Maryse Wright, see [cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk](http://cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk)

**The Arts Society Cheltenham: Day of Special Interest**

Thu 6 Mar, 10am, Cheltenham Bowling Club, Suffolk Square,

How To Look at Art: A Strategy for Interpretation, with Lynne Gibson. Introducing a flexible approach to interpreting any piece of art work, giving you the confidence to become an active, rather than a passive, viewer, for anyone interested in visiting galleries, exhibitions and art museums. More details: [theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk](http://theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk)

### **Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust**

Mon 10 Mar, 7 for 7.15, members £5, welcome guests £10, St Luke's Hall, GL53 7HP, Francesca Murray returns to talk about the Rothschild family's love of orchids and The Eighth Wonder of the World: Exbury Gardens and the Rothschilds, co-written with Lionel de Rothschild and published in 2022

### **The Arts Society Cheltenham: Seasonality and Decoration in Japan spring/summer**

Tue 11 Mar, 7.15pm, members free, visitors £8, students £4, The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, with Pauline Chakmakjian. The Japanese decorate their homes and themselves according to the time of the year. From clothes to food to art objects we will see and understand the

motifs used for spring and summer, as well as explore the almost obsessive Japanese fascination with cherry blossoms. See [theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk](http://theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk) or email [info.cheltenham@theartssociety.org](mailto:info.cheltenham@theartssociety.org)

### **Cercle Français: Un petit tour de chansons françaises humoristiques**

Mon 17 Mar, 7.30pm, Zoom to members at home, with Thierry Viennois, see [cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk](http://cheltenhamfrenchcircle.co.uk)

### **Friends of The Wilson**

Tue 18 Mar, 2pm, members £11, non-members £13, St Matthew's Church, Edward Wilson and his place in A History of Polar Exploration in 50 Objects, with Anne Strathie. Booking at [friendsofthewilson.org.uk/events/](http://friendsofthewilson.org.uk/events/)

### **Cheltenham German Club: Farmers v.**

### **Warriors: the deep past history of the German language**

Fri 21 Mar, 7 for 7.30pm, The New Club, Montpellier Parade, with Mike Phillips, in English, see [cheltgesell.uk](http://cheltgesell.uk)

### **Cheltenham Local History Society**

Wed 26 Mar, 7.30pm, St Luke's Hall, Families, Fortunes & Philanthropists: the Memorials of St Philip & St James, with Neela

Mann

### **Cheltenham Local History Society**

Tue 1 Apr, 10.30am, St Luke's Hall, Walking Gloucestershire with Ivor Gurney, with Eleanor Rawling

### **Gloucestershire Gardens and Landscape Trust**

Mon 7 Apr, 7 for 7.15, members £5, welcome guests £10, St Luke's Hall, GL53 7HP, talk by Dr Fiona Crouch with the title including a quote from Charles Wade himself, "A place for pretty thoughts and soft musings": the value of the outdoor rooms at Snowhill Manor. Dr Crouch discusses these rooms created by Wade as a refuge for himself and their continuing value for the 21st century visitor

### **The Arts Society Cheltenham: Bath – the story of a city**

Tue 8 Apr, 7.15pm, members free, visitors £8, students £4, The Pavilion, Hatherley Lane, with Jonathan Foyle. Famous as England's most beautiful Georgian city, Bath was a medieval and ancient city, too. So what were its origins, which ideas fell by the wayside, and what do the major individual buildings have to tell us when we look at them closely? See [theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk](http://theartssocietycheltenham.org.uk)



SU TRINKLE, POP RING, GLOUCESTERSHIRE GUILD

org.uk or email  
info.cheltenham@  
theartsociety.org

**Cheltenham German  
Club: The Mosel-Camino**

Fri 11 Apr, 7 for  
7.30pm, The New Club,  
Montpellier Parade,  
with Greg Arnold, see  
cheltgesell.uk

**Friends of The Wilson**

Mon 14 Apr, 7.15pm,  
members £11, non-  
members £13, St Luke's  
Hall, Unbuilt Bath, with  
Julian Orbach. Booking at  
friendsofthewilson.org.uk/  
events/

**Cercle Français:  
L'héritage de Napoléon  
Bonaparte: 200 ans après  
sa mort, que reste-t-il?**

Mon 14 Apr, 7.30pm,  
St Luke's Hall, with  
Brigitte Thibaut, see  
cheltenhamfrenchcircle.  
co.uk

**Cheltenham Local  
History Society**

Wed 16 Apr, 7.30pm, St  
Luke's Hall, 400 Years of  
Stroudwater Textiles, with  
Ian Mackintosh

**Cercle Français: Soirée  
Film**

Mon 28 Apr, 7.30pm,  
St Luke's Hall, see  
cheltenhamfrenchcircle.  
co.uk

## CHELTENHAM ITALIAN SOCIETY

### AN EVENING OF ITALIAN OPERA

It is not possible to talk about Italian culture without mentioning opera; its contribution was as significant as that of Italian art and literature.

Opera is not aimed at a particular group of people, but is in fact a very popular form of artistic expression that has often reached across the class divide. So it was with great pleasure that on November 11th 2024, the Cheltenham Italian Society was able to host an evening of Italian opera arias at St Andrews Church, Montpellier, as part of their annual programme. This event, which was partially sponsored by the Cheltenham Arts Council, featured members of the Cheltenham Vocal Academy singers and their pianist.

An audience of over 120 people including Cheltenham's Mayor, Mr Paul Baker, members and friends of the Italian Society, and members of the Cheltenham community at large, had the opportunity to enjoy some very famous arias performed by the Cheltenham Vocal Academy with singers Aiden Smith, Director and bass, Cathy Keeling soprano, David Willcock tenor, and Fiona Brown pianist.

As well as performing arias from the Marriage of Figaro, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Rigoletto and Tosca, to mention just a few, Aiden Smith took us on a journey, outlining the development of Italian opera from Monteverdi to Puccini, and its expansion throughout Italy and Europe across the centuries to include Mozart, Donizetti, Verdi and other famous composers. This part of the programme was almost as enjoyable as the performance of the arias, enabling our audience to acquire a sense of how Italian opera developed through the centuries, and to recognise famous arias such as 'Che Gelida Manina' from Puccini's La Boheme.



AN EVENING OF ITALIAN OPERA AT ST ANDREWS CHURCH

It was a very pleasant, joyful and informative evening. During the interval the public had an opportunity to socialize amongst themselves, meet the Mayor, the Cheltenham Italian Society's Members and the artists. There was also an opportunity for David Black, one of the Elders of Saint Andrew's Church, our venue for the evening, to publicise an appeal for the rebuilding of Saint Andrew's spire.

The evening was a very great success in every possible way. The Cheltenham Italian Society is grateful for the support of Cheltenham Arts Council which helped to make this event possible, allowing us to reach such a wide and diverse audience. We hope that this was just the beginning of a close relationship in the future.

Regina Wynn



## THE ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING SOCIETY

### TAKING SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING INTO THE COMMUNITY

**W**e at the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society (RSCDS) are well known for our love of Scottish country dancing, just for the sheer pleasure of dancing to wonderful music in the company of friends.

What is perhaps less well-known is that we sometimes take our passion out into the community to perform demonstrations of what we love to do.

The Cheltenham branch of the RSCDS has an active demonstration team and we are regularly invited to dance for all sorts of organisations. We have danced for many of the local care homes and day centres, bringing smiles to faces and even a bit of toe tapping! We have danced at village and community fetes, usually outside if the weather is kind, which attracts the attention of a much wider audience. We have danced for the Girl Guides and their leaders, and we are greatly in demand for Burns' Night celebrations.

A typical demonstration aims to showcase the best of Scottish country dancing and to give the audience an idea of the range of the dances we enjoy. Scottish country dancing grew out of a merger between the English dancing style of the 18th century and the Scottish tradition of dancing reels. There are thousands of listed dances, with new dances being added each year, so a demonstration will include traditional as well as modern dances. We also include dances with different tempos, from the lively jigs and reels to the more stately, slower strathspey which is unique to this form of dance. Of course, there can be no dancing without music and there is a wealth of Scottish tunes associated with Scottish country dances – dancing to the sound of fiddle and accordion is a delight - and very



SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

hard to resist! We often include dances that have come from our international branches. It might come as a surprise to learn that the RSCDS has branches throughout the world in 27 countries, from the USA and Canada to Russia, from South Africa to Australia and New Zealand, from Argentina to Japan, as well as in many European countries.

Following the main part of our display, we usually invite some audience participation which gives people a chance to join with us in some of the easier dances and experience for themselves the absolute joy of Scottish country dancing.

We do not charge, but as we are a charity we ask that a donation is made to the branch. If you would like us to dance for you, please contact us through our website: [rscdscheltenham.org](http://rscdscheltenham.org)

Or if you would like to come to our regular classes, we meet at St Luke's Hall on Mondays from 7.30 - 9.30pm. Please see the website for details.

**Anne Wyatt**

## A CELEBRATION OF CHORAL HARMONY

### AN EVENING OF INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION

**O**n November 1st 2024 in the beautiful acoustic setting of St Mark's Church, Cheltenham, three distinct choral ensembles came together to create an unforgettable musical evening.

The concert was hosted by the Cotswolds-based Tapestry Chamber Choir, their Dutch guests The New Choral Singers based in The Hague, and the debut formal performance of The Curious Choir, a brand-new Cheltenham-based community choir, thus marking a significant milestone in cross-cultural choral collaboration. All the choirs were accompanied by John Wilderspin on piano and organ. This concert was a lovely opportunity for a reciprocal visit following Tapestry's 2023 tour to The Hague and the joint concert hosted there by The New Choral Singers.

#### A Foundation of Sacred Music

The evening opened with Charles Wood's triumphant "Hail Gladdening Light" for double choir performed by Tapestry and The New Choral Singers. This ambitious choice immediately demonstrated the technical prowess of both ensembles, their voices interweaving under the shared direction of Sandra Burne and Freek Elbers.

The New Choral Singers then presented a thoughtfully curated sacred repertoire that showcased their versatility. Their performance of Elbers's original composition "Lighten Our Darkness" offered a glimpse into contemporary Dutch choral writing, while their interpretations of Brown's 'O Lux Beata' and Wood's 'O Thou the Central Orb' displayed their mastery of traditional sacred music.

Tapestry Chamber Choir's response celebrated their Gloucestershire heritage through renditions of Holst's 'Turn Back O Man' and Howells' 'A Hymn for St Cecilia' performed with characteristic sensitivity to these local composers' unique musical languages.

#### New Voices and Contemporary Sounds

The second half brought a delightful surprise with the formal debut of The Curious Choir. This new community ensemble, though only formed in September, tackled with characteristic gusto the challenging 'Songs of a Disney Villain' (arr. Billingsley). Their performance was particularly impressive given that many members are non-music readers, demonstrating the power of inclusive choral singing.

The collaboration between Tapestry Chamber Choir and The Curious Choir in Tabbush's 'Harbour' and Bernon's 'Oceans and Stars' created moments of emotional resonance, the combined voices bringing these contemporary works to life.





TAPESTRY CHAMBER CHOIR CONCERT

### Cultural Exchange Through Song

The programme's latter portion highlighted the international nature of the evening. Tapestry's secular set ranged from Rutter's elegant arrangement of 'O Waly Waly' to Carter's jazz-influenced 'Autumn Leaves' and Partington's contemplative 'Crossing the Bar'. The New Choral Singers responded with an equally diverse selection, including Rheinberger's 'Abendlied' and a particularly memorable performance of Nilsson's 'Gabiella Sang' featuring an outstanding solo performance. Their rendition of Bridge's 'The Goslings' displayed their ability to handle lighter repertoire with charm and wit.

A highlight of the cultural exchange came when Tapestry joined the New Choral Singers for 'Een Nachtegaal in Echternach', their carefully practised Dutch pronunciation earning praise from their counterparts from The Hague. This moment embodied the evening's spirit of musical fellowship, which led to a rousing encore as all participants, including the audience, joined in a moving rendition of 'We'll Meet Again'.

### Community Support and Impact

The success of this international collaboration was made possible through the generous support of Cheltenham Arts Council, whose contribution helped facilitate this remarkable evening of music-making. The audience's appreciation was evident not only in their enthusiastic response throughout the concert but also in their generous retiring collection, which raised approximately £200.

This concert represented more than just a performance; it was a celebration of international friendship, community collaboration, and the universal language of choral music, strengthening the musical bonds between these communities and setting a promising precedent for future collaborations.

**Simon Burne**