

### Introduction from the Chair



2023 has been a year of change and consolidation for CCT with changes at the helm and new partnerships forged.

We are extremely lucky at Canterbury Cantata Trust to have a perfect successor as Artistic Director to our founder, Professor Grenville Hancox. Having been a student of Grenville's at Canterbury Christ Church University, then following a busy and successful career in music education, Emily Renshaw-Kidd is the perfect fit. Emily and Grenville have frequently worked together, adhering to the same guiding ethos of "caring through singing" and, following a handover period, she is now leading as principal singing ambassador for the charity. Our fruitful relationship with local school, Simon Langton School for Boys, will also be further reinforced. We thank Grenville for his huge dedication to the Trust and advancement of music for wellbeing. We are delighted to have awarded him the well-earned position of *Honorary President of Canterbury Cantata Trust*.

The launch of the Parkinson's Centre for Integrated Therapy in Canterbury in April was a great success and received excellent coverage, with the singing session led by Emily being mentioned by Mark Mardell, a member of the podcast group, "Movers and Shakers", alongside Jeremy Paxman, Gillian Lacey-Solymar, Rory Cellan-Jones and others.



Former BBC R4 presenter, North America Editor, Europe Editor, Chief Political correspondent, Mark Mardell, (now freelance writer and broadcaster) said: "The all-singing, all-dancing centre is now launched! Ever since I first heard about it, I thought the Parkinson Centre for integrative therapy in Canterbury was a good idea. But visiting it in person convinced me it is a brilliant one"

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**PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS** Under the stewardship of the trustees and Emily Renshaw-Kidd, the Trust will move forward to consolidate its position following the pandemic period. Thus, it will continue to grow the member base of all its flagship choirs and singing groups, fostering confidence among its members and supporters. A schedule of public performances by Canterbury Cantata and Amici Chorus will continue. Cohesion and imbuing a sense of unity between the individual singing groups is important and, in that vein, a whole Trust collaborative concert is planned at the Colyer Fergusson hall, Canterbury, for Summer 2024. This will showcase our singing groups who will each perform their own set and bring the whole Trust together as one ensemble to sing *Zimbe!* (an African Cantata).

Monday Music Folkestone, under Grenville Hancox's facilitation, has begun a cross-generational project with St. Peter's Primary School in Folkestone and they joined with the whole school in December 2023 for the first in a series of collaborative, community singing experiences.

I am hugely grateful, as ever, to the teams that support our singing groups and to the board of trustees, helping to enrich the lives of us all by being the driving force behind the evolution of the Trust. **Roshna Ahmad**



### CCT EVOLUTION in 2023

Emily Renshaw-Kidd said: "I am extremely honoured and excited to become the new *Artistic Director for Canterbury Cantata Trust*. As I am already heavily

involved with the trust in my role as Musical Director of the Canterbury Cantata Choir and lead one of our Skylark's Sing to Beat Parkinson's group together with several other community singing groups, this will create new opportunities for bringing the community together, in a caring way, through singing and music.

My position of director of music at Simon Langton School for Boys and their participation in the Skylarks sessions will allow us to work to create a recognised methodology for Singing with Parkinson's and encourage the next generation to utilise the benefits of music with degenerative conditions."

## SING to BEAT .....



Sing to Beat to people who in delivering singing and health sessions.



## Training and Mentoring

In November 2023, Sing to Beat ran another successful online training programme, completed by more than 20 apprentice singing and health facilitators with the focus on Sing to Beat Parkinson's. In March 2023, we delivered our first in-person training since January 2020 at our residential course at Snape Maltings in Suffolk. This was the first training event where delegates needed to meet certain criteria to take part: namely, experience of running a singing and health group. continues to run a mentoring programme, which is available have completed our introductory training and need support

A new scheme was launched in April 2023, in partnership with local (Kent) CIC, Music4Wellbeing, and further explored 'practice development and quality assurance' in facilitation. Both mentors and mentees found it an invaluable experience for CPD. Special thanks, as before, goes to our core team of Matt Shipton (Programme Director) Nicola Wydenbach (Director of Training) Trish Vella-Burrows (Trainer and Music4Wellbeing) and Yoon Irons (Researcher at University of Derby).

**TRAINING TESTIMONIALS:** *'Thank you so much for all you do for us all. it was a brilliant weekend.'*  
*'Thanks so much for a wonderful weekend- it was great fun and veryRe inspiring. So grateful for all the input from everyone'*  
*'I'm so pleased, as without this last weekend, I probably wouldn't have been so enthused to compose this. Thank you all for giving me and my groups a boost!'*

**Aesop Arts and Health Online Platform** Sing to Beat was the exclusive singing and health partner for the testing of an exciting new online Arts and Health portal that has now officially launched. This is run by Aesop, a nationally renowned champion of arts and health projects aiming to match arts and health provision with individuals or organisations (e.g. social prescribers) in the field. This can be found at: <https://prescribe-arts.org/>. Sing to Beat Programme Director, Matt Shipton, is now on the advisory board.

**Sing to Beat Long Covid** In 2023, we continued to host a weekly online Sing to Beat Long Covid group. The facilitation has been led chiefly by Dara McMahon in Ireland with Matt Shipton supporting, and has proved a key component in recovery for many of the participants. There have been 15 people in the core group, with the average weekly attendance of 7/8. This is complemented by a WhatsApp group for participants, which they all find a valuable resource for supporting each other. This initiative is currently under review as we undertake a survey to establish its continued viability.

**App development** Sing to Beat's training director received confirmation from Arts Council England to complete an App for Singing and Parkinson's that has been jointly supported and developed by Sing to Beat. The app offers participants the opportunity to have exercises, songs, warm-ups, both physical and mental on their devices at home, and will enable closer monitoring of the impact on the end user.

UPDATE: In early 2024, the residential course moved to Folkestone and this venue will continue to be used in 2025.

**Matt Shipton – Programme Director**

**DONATIONS TO CCT Through Give As You Live** have now reached over £12,000 after nearly 4 years, helping us continue to support both our online sessions and our to face to face singing. Please do sign up to contribute to CCT through your online purchases if you have not already done so, as every little bit helps! Thank you.



**£41.60** Raised via shopping **£12,167.20** Raised in total (Feb '24)

RIP: Remembering Molly, a dearly missed member of Monday Music: "In loving memory of Molly who loved to sing with friends and will be deeply missed but we hope this donation in her memory keeps the singing going for more people to enjoy in the future."

Sing to Beat @SingtoBeat: 7h  
 Our fab new Artistic Director @erenshawkidd leading a willing audience in a singing workshop at the new YOPD (young onset PD) mini-conference and flying the Sing to Beat Parkinson's flag



## OUR FAMILY OF SINGING GROUPS « *Caring Through Singing* »

**CANTERBURY SKYLARKS in 2023** Skylarks continues with weekly sessions during term time; fortnightly on zoom, and in alternate weeks, in person at the Kent Multiple Sclerosis Centre where we sing in the main foyer so anyone there can enjoy our singing and is welcome to join in if they wish!

Emily Renshaw-Kidd leads the sessions (Grenville was doing the zoom ones) and she is just amazing. We have 15 to 16 Skylarks singers who attend in-person, joined by 3 or 4 Langton boys whenever they can, and around 20 at the zoom sessions. David Jones accompanies us beautifully on the piano with his wife alongside (David has dementia so Clare always comes too), welcomed as so many partners and carers are, providing a much-needed social interaction and caring environment.

Not long ago, after a Skylarks session, a woman who had been waiting for a friend in the centre foyer while we were singing commented on how the mood in the room lifted

after the session, which, of course, is why we all do this! **Lucy Markes, Chair of Canterbury Skylarks**



**AMICI CHORUS 2023** Amici Chorus Canterbury is a non-auditioned choir, rehearsing on Wednesday evenings and presenting regular concerts. Currently we have 50 to 60 members, but there is always room for more! We are truly an inclusive choir, open to all, with the majority of singers being retired (a current member is excited at the prospect of receiving her telegram from the King in less than five years!). We are very fortunate in still having the immensely able and experienced Christopher Gower as our

répétiteur, taking in his stride providing all the accompaniments for our concerts since the start of 2023.

We uphold the trust's philosophy of 'Caring through Singing', and I strive to offer an inclusive learning process for singers of a wide range of abilities, with some sectional rehearsals this term. Encouraged by the response to new and unusual work alongside choral classics, I have recently chosen Chilcott's 'On Christmas Night', and this term's Dvořák's "Stabat Mater" in its rarely heard 1876 original version.

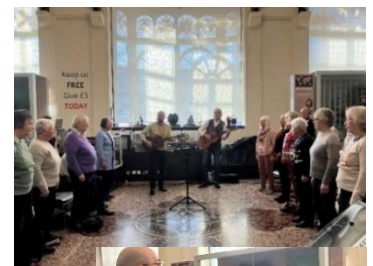
I have also maintained the tradition of a lighter summer concert with 'An Evening of Gilbert and Sullivan' In July featuring some fantastic conservatoire students as soloists. Our December 2023 performance of 'On Christmas Night' saw singers from Canterbury Cantata join us, one of whom sang the baritone solo in this lovely work. They also provided a much-welcomed boost in the Bach and Handel pieces in this concert, a welcome collaboration between different parts of the Trust!

Summer 2024 sees the performance of the fine but rarely heard Edward German operetta, *Merrie England*. A huge vote of thanks to Anthea and all volunteers who help everything run so smoothly. **Stefan Catto**

### MONDAY MUSIC CANTERBURY & FOLKESTONE

Both groups meet at 11am on Monday mornings in Folkestone and Canterbury. There is no need to be able to read music as they use lyric sheets for the songs. The repertoire is built around familiar songs, new ones, and simple fun rounds. Phil Self runs the Canterbury group at St. Paul's church, Canterbury and Grenville leads in Folkestone.

A recent highlight was the session as part of "SOUNDS BEANEY" (photo left) in December 2023 at the Beaney Institute in Canterbury. Returning to their pre-COVID venue, they demonstrated the enjoyment, camaraderie and feel-good sensation engendered by singing with others. The well-known tunes such as *Amazing Grace* and *Li'l Liza Jane* soon had everyone on their feet, blending their voices in harmony.



**Phil Self**



**Folkestone Monday Music** group is a direct result not only of a CCT initiative but also through support from Kent Community Foundation. Each Monday 35-45 people attend, predominantly female, largely in the 70+ age range. It reflects our society, with active retirees anxious to maintain good health and social contact, some who are lonely or experiencing bereavement, some with neurological conditions such as dementia or Parkinson's, and those with other physical impairments.

With the death of my wife, Anne in October last, I too can testify to the strength and salve derived from singing with others when embraced by shared sounds and their warmth and love.

Michelle Fletcher is a tireless volunteer for the group ([mondaysmusicmichelle@outlook.com](mailto:mondaysmusicmichelle@outlook.com)). **Grenville Hancox**

## CANTERBURY CANTATA



Cantata has become a popular option as a singing group tackling challenging repertoire and we are now receiving member enquires from further afield. We are enjoying fruitful collaborations with other musicians, including taking part as the ensemble choir in English Touring Opera's Canterbury performance of Handel's *Giulio Cesare*.

In addition to providing an opportunity to challenge our singers and treat audiences to lesser performed repertoire, Cantata's mission to support the other singing groups within the trust was fulfilled with several members of Cantata joining Amici for their concerts.

During 2023, the choir had a successful year with four public performances: *Elijah* in February 2023; a concert at the Grand, Folkestone in March funded by Bayle Music featuring works by Bach and Handel, and our "Folk and Fervour" concert in June 2023.

Finally in October, a large and enthusiastic audience were treated to the moving *Requiem, Eternal Light* by Howard Goodall featuring as soloist, soprano from the choir, Sophie Barker and former student at Langton, Joseph Morris. We are currently working towards our Spring concert featuring French repertoire including Duruflé *Requiem* and Poulenc *Gloria* we are very much looking forward to joining together as a whole trust in June 2024.

**Emily Renshaw-Kidd**



### DATES for YOUR DIARY.....

**Saturday March 16<sup>th</sup> 7pm** Canterbury Cantata perform a programme of French music including Poulenc, Boulanger, Duruflé and Barker at St. Paul's Church, Canterbury

**Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm Amici** chorus perform Dvořák *Stabat Mater* at St. Paul's Church, Canterbury

**Summer CCT celebratory concert 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 3pm Colyer Fergusson Hall**

**Amici Summer concert "Merrie England "** July date tbc

### SPONSORS and DONORS

Thanks go to Atherton's Grassroots Fund following another £1,000 donation in January 2023. The Trust was fortunate to be the recipient of several grants awarded by KCF including, in January 2023, a £500 Cost of Living Uplift grant and a partnership with Owen Hearing was forged.



We are enormously grateful, as ever, to all our generous donors in 2023 who have enabled us to continue our rewarding work; the Pargiter Trust and Wards (under the administration of Kent Community Foundation), OAK foundation, Owen Hearing, generous choir members, and the many participants who have supported our online sessions with donations. Thank you to every one of you for continuing to enable our life-enriching activities.

