

Charnwood 50th messages

As patron of the Charnwood Orchestra I offer my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. It has been a great pleasure to play concertos with Nic and the orchestra over the years and I look forward to many more such fruitful collaborations in future seasons.

Tom Bowes

I send my best wishes to the Charnwood Orchestra celebrating their Golden Anniversary Season. I have fond recollections of performing the Dvorak concerto with this most friendly and supportive orchestra under their excellent conductor Nic Fallowfield.

**Best wishes,
George Ewart**

Dear Charnwood Orchestra,

Incredible to think that you are enjoying a Golden Anniversary! I am grateful to have played a small part in your history, but you are playing a large part right now - who can measure the good that has been done in lives and the community through your endeavours?

It will continue, I'm sure, so here's wishing you every success, strength to strength, in the future!

Anthony Thompson.

I have had the pleasure of performing with the Charnwood Orchestra for many years now and it is always such a privilege. It is fantastic to be able to perform such a wide range of repertoire and with musicians of such a high standard. Aside from this the members of the orchestra are so kind and hospitable and I always feel welcomed when I come to sing with them.

Nic is a brilliant conductor who has given me many opportunities from the start of my career, for which I am immensely grateful. Happy anniversary Charnwood, here's to the next 50!

Lizzie Ryder

From David Bowler, Violin 2:

I have always found Charnwood Orchestra members to be, not only very friendly, but also very forgiving.

Two examples of "forgiving" are:

1) We were playing a Beethoven Symphony and, unlike me, I got "carried away". So much so that, on the downstroke, my bow flew off the strings, and on the next upstroke jammed itself under the bridge.

I had to leave the rehearsal to "unjam" the bow.

2) When I was working, I often used to be very tired by the time I arrived at rehearsals. One evening I must have "dropped off" for a split second, my bow falling to the floor with a clatter.

On both these occasions, orchestra members were very understanding, and didn't hold these "happenings" against me!

From Paul Hilliam

One of many memories of my time with Charnwood Orchestra occurred during the first trip to France. Just before the concert in St Clotilde in central Paris, John Smith (trombone) came to see me with his arm in a sling. Apparently he'd had an accident during the afternoon while sightseeing and now couldn't play in the concert. Disaster! But it turned out the joke was on me. Katherine Barwell (the tour doctor) had put the sling on John just to see how I would react! It was definitely a moment of panic!

Another vivid memory of the first French tour also involves Katherine. It was during that trip that she met Jon Barwell, who came along as an extra violinist. Jon sat next to Katherine on the return coach trip back to the UK and was promptly sick all over her! Thankfully that didn't stop them later getting married and Jon going on to become the orchestra's highly respected leader!

An early concert in Barrow-upon-Soar holds special memories for me because it led to meeting my wife Rachel. Rob Moulin, a violinist in the orchestra, conducted the first Barrow concerts. He was keen to get some conducting experience and the committee was happy to encourage him. When I went along to hear the concert I spotted a young student playing as a guest in the viola section. When I spoke to her in the pub after the concert it was clear she didn't recognise me. This was a bit of a surprise as she had played in two Bardi Symphony Orchestra rehearsals the week before, that I had conducted!

From Ruth Kendon

It's a long time ago and memories fade. I do have one photo *[NB included on this website with other 50th anniversary memories]* showing Bobby Gibbs as soloist in Bruch's Scottish Fantasia. He came on two occasions and played this and the Dvorak violin concerto with us. I think this photo was taken in 1982.

The picture includes names from the past like Edith Perkins, Jack Coney, Roger Allwood, David and Liz Thomas, Peter Hunt and Jane Green, but also several who are still there, including Mary Treasure, David Wilkins and Judith and David Rogers. I'm sorry that I can't remember many of the other names.

I particularly remember what an exceptionally friendly orchestra it was, with Wind and Strings all socialising together [whereas in most orchestras they rarely intermingle!] I remember the post-concert parties at various people's homes, and in rehearsals the merry banter and witty one-liners flying back and forth [often between the three Davids!] and which even brought a smile to the face of the otherwise rather serious and quite demanding [though popular] conductor, the late Joe O'Reilly, who often got quite stressed as concerts approached!

Other particular memories: Jane Green striding on to lead in a concert, having just given birth that very morning! She got a special round of applause!

Alan Tomkins playing the Haydn [or Hummel?] Trumpet Concerto from the pulpit of a chapel in [?]Coalville, where we were holding the concert. At the afternoon rehearsal, some bright spark called out "What's your sermon, Alan?" to which another instantly responded: "Something about Jericho, I should think!" Such quick-witted banter and repartee was typical in the jovial ambiance of the Orchestra.

I enjoyed my time in the Charnwood hugely and felt very sad to leave when we moved away. On the several occasions when I was able to join the audience during a visit to Loughborough or Quorn, I was warmly welcomed and delighted to find an Orchestra which had grown in number and reached an impressive standard of performance, and yet retained that special ambiance of friendliness and good humour. On moving to a different area I did my best towards recreating that some special ambiance in "my" new local orchestra.

Thank you, Charnwood, for those very happy years in your Viola section!