

Musical Musings – October

It was really lovely to see the church so full on Harvest Festival day, especially as there were so many children present, clearly having fun! It was also marvellous that this month's "Open" Evensong fell at Harvest time so people had the chance to have a good sing of Harvest music. It is very encouraging that so many people are enjoying these once a month opportunities to sing. Do please encourage your friends to come along.

Sunday 7th also marked the centenary of the death of one of England's greatest composers, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry. Parry was actually born in Bournemouth and later went to school in Twyford before going to Eton and then Oxford. His father had high hopes for him with a career in Insurance and Parry did not study music at Oxford. But it soon became clear that his calling in life was to be music and he thirsted for musical knowledge from the very best of his time, both in England and across Europe, where he was influenced by such composers as Brahms and Mendelssohn.

As a young man, Parry composed with enthusiasm and skill and it wasn't long before he was noticed and his works started to be performed. In later life Parry became Head of the Royal College of Music in London and later Professor of Music at Oxford. In these two posts he had a profound influence on many composers of note, including Ralph Vaughan Williams and Herbert Howells.

Parry wrote symphonies, chamber music, solo songs and much for the church – and it amongst these compositions that you may well be familiar with his music. He is best known as the writer of the tune for the hymn "Jerusalem", as well as "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind". You may well know the anthem, "Blest pair of Sirens" and will probably for sure know the coronation anthem, "I was Glad". If you are reading this and think you would like to hear more of Parry's music, then can I direct you to his wonderful set of unaccompanied motets, "Songs of Farewell" – they are quite exquisite! We certainly have a lot to thank Parry for.

Simon Lole