

Sing Joyfully

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter



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AUGUST

Evensong for St Bartholomew's Day Saturday 25 August

We sang Evensong to a moderate but enthusiastic congregation; Brewer's canticles, Psalm 145, Howells *O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*. The singing was good, even though some key singers were missing.

And we sang at both morning services the following day with choirs of about 20 voices (less a couple at 8 am and plus a couple at 10 am).

Congratulations to all involved.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday 23 September

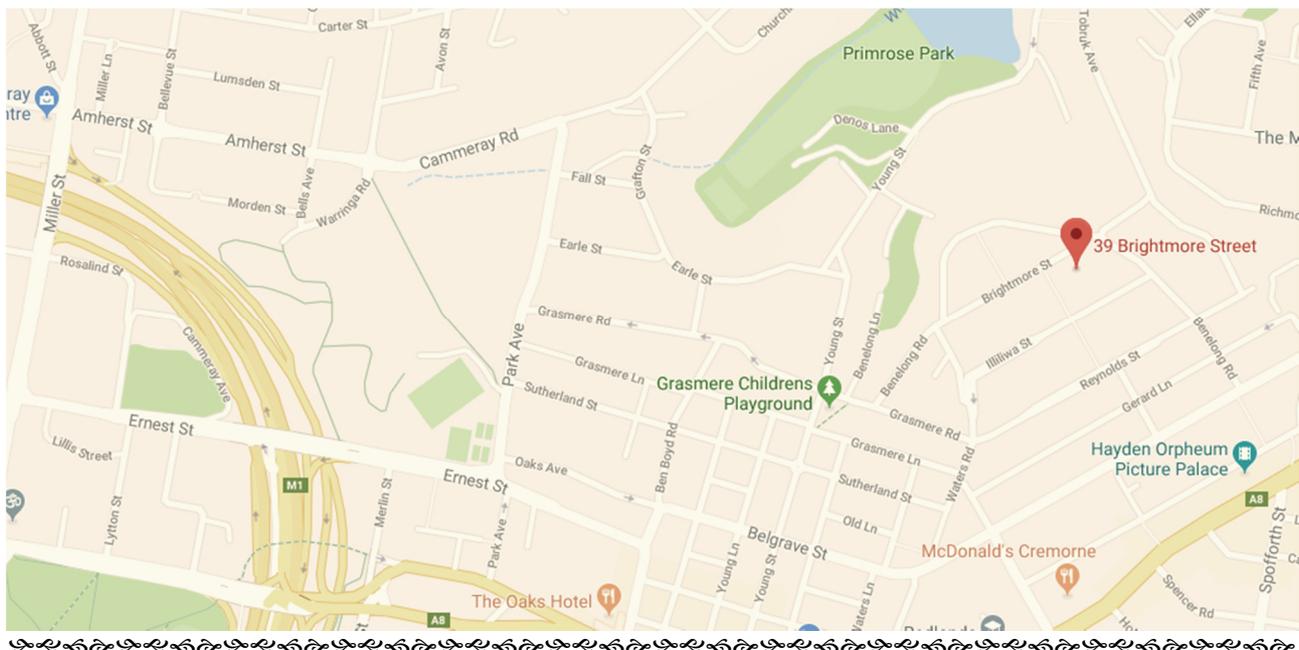
We sing just about all day today, starting with the 8 am and 10 am services. Then there is:

- **Zoe Snell's Baptism. 11:30 am**

Followed by our annual

- **Choir soiree at the Gilkes home, 3:30 pm**

Everyone is invited to sing at this very pleasant and happy event. Speak to Peter Hamilton about your choice (which can be absolutely anything you choose). And some of us will go simply to listen. The Gilkes live at 39 Brightmore Street, Cremorne, see map below. Contributions of food and drink are welcome.



Salisbury 2020

The Cathedral

Salisbury Cathedral is not only endowed with surpassing beauty, but there is no trace of foreign influence in its design. It remains what it was on the day the spire was finally completed – the most perfect realisation of pure English Gothic. If the existing building had been, like its predecessor, “set on a hill” it would have formed one of the most imposing landmarks in the Kingdom. As it is, the top of the octagonal spire (404 feet from the ground) is considerably higher than the ramparts of Old Sarum Hill. Salisbury Cathedral rises majestically from a level expanse of green sward encircled by rows of giant elms and limes, and surrounded by walls (broken here and there, by ancient gateways) constructed to a large extent from stone which once did duty at Old Sarum. It is difficult to say whether the Close derives more beauty from the Cathedral, or the Cathedral from the Close. The harmony between them is complete, and few jarring notes are to be found in the “homes of ancient peace” which have for long years existed in the shadow of the loftiest pinnacle in all England – one of the foremost glories of “Wonderful Wessex”.



The text above is taken from a book published in 1926 by The Great Western Railway, promoting cathedrals located within the reach of that particular railway company.

The current cathedral was not the first one in the area. In 1092, the first Salisbury Cathedral was completed at Old Sarum, close to the Norman castle, (some 3½ km north of the present cathedral) at the direction of Osmund, the first Bishop of Salisbury. It is thought that the Domesday Book was presented to King William I here in 1086. The old Cathedral’s foundations are all that remain, much like the rest of the original city. Salisbury Cathedral has a model of the settlement for visitors who want to see Old Sarum Cathedral in its heyday.

A couple of hundred years after Old Sarum Cathedral was established, however, deteriorating relations between the Church and the castle garrison caused the diocese to seek a move from Old Sarum. The Church complained that the soldiers harassed the churchmen and parishioners alike and there was struggle over water usage with the castle, amongst other issues with the cathedral itself. The bishop of the time, Herbert Poore, got permission to start a new cathedral building. His brother Richard donated the land on which it sits today, which amazingly enough, was a site completely unobstructed by natural features.

It was Bishop Richard Poore who began work on the cathedral in 1220 after succeeding his brother in 1217. Designed in a Gothic style, the original architect is unknown, though is thought to have been a collaboration between Elias of Dereham and Nicholas of Ely. Bishop Poore laid the first five stones on 28 April 1220. The stone for the church was sourced locally, with the marble coming from a privately owned local quarry, while King Henry III himself donated the timber.

Over the next fifty years, construction proceeded uninterrupted, giving the cathedral a more uniform look than many of its contemporaries that were built or expanded in stages. Trinity Chapel was finished only five years after construction began, the cathedral was ready for consecration in 1258, and the roof and other parts continued until 1266. The spire was not a part of the original building plans, which instead featured a more ordinary tower. Around the 14th Century, work began on the spire in a style similar to Old St. Paul’s and Lincoln Cathedral. By the time construction finished on it, the spire would be the tallest in England at 404 feet (123 metres). While this wasn’t always the case, the spires at Old St. Paul’s, Lincoln, and Malmesbury Abbey eventually fell, making the spire at Salisbury the tallest and the longest-standing.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN THE CHOIR’S TRIP TO SALISBURY IN AUGUST 2020?

Many have already registered an interest. If you are one of the few that haven't, please express your interest, or otherwise, by sending an email to chideock@optusnet.com.au or by speaking to Brian Watson. The quicker the better, so that the committee can start work in earnest.



Commissions and dedications



A week or so ago, one of our readers asked us who was Helen Kemp. Confessing ignorance, we undertook to see what we could learn about her.

The first page of our manuscript copies of John Rutter's anthem *All things bright and beautiful* carry the message "Commissioned by Westminster Choir College for Helen Kemp"; hence the original question.

Our research has concluded that Westminster Choir College is a residential college of music located in Princeton, New Jersey, United States, and a part of Rider University. It has a reputation for choral excellence going back 85 years.

Helen Kemp worked for almost 80 years as a singer, teacher, choir director and composer. In 1949 she founded the Choristers Guild, which turned into an America-wide movement. Hundreds of US professionals owed her their first musical experience. Helen, who was 97 at the time of her death in 2015, had been professor of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, where her late husband, John, headed the church music department. She was still conducting into her 90s.

John Rutter's commission to compose music to Mrs Alexander's words for children coincided with Helen's 70th birthday.

Another of Rutter's works was similarly commissioned. *For the beauty of the earth*, published in 1980, carries the message, "For Rosemary Heffler and the Texas Choral Directors' Association". Rosemary Heffler is an American choir director. She was President of the Texas Association from 1979-81. Rutter's anthem may have been written for a choral competition, but this is mere speculation. It was to be sung by school or amateur choirs.



Yet another of the pieces we have sung recently is Herbert Howells' *O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*. This, the first in a set of four anthems, is dedicated "to Thomas Armstrong".

The set of anthems was composed early in 1941. The first three were written during one week in January when Howells was staying in Cheltenham after his London home had been destroyed in an air raid. All four were dedicated to Sir Thomas Armstrong, a close friend of Howells. Armstrong was organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and it was he who gave the first complete performance of the set on 20 February 1944. Sir Thomas died in 1994 having lived for 96 years.



Choir program – 2018

Date	Venue	Time	
Sun 23 Sep	39 Brightmore St, Cremorne	3 30 pm	Choir soiree @ Chez Gilkes
Sat 3 Nov	Swiz	5 pm	Evensong for the persecuted church
Sat 1 Dec	Swiz	5 pm	Advent hymn festival
Mon 10 Dec	RNSH	Lunchtime	Carols in the atrium

Note that nothing is final until the actual day has arrived, so please be mindful of possible changes.