

Musical Director's Report for AGM 2025 .

What a wonderful year of music it has been. The Christmas concert in 2024 was very successful and it was a particular delight to welcome Phillip Augar and Lawrence Mann, violins, in Das Neugebor'ne Kinderlein by Buxtehude, with Debra Warner on continuo. The choir sang with great energy and commitment (in German!) and it was a real success. Phillip and Lawrence also performed stunning solos which added another beautiful dimension to the programme. We were fortunate enough that Lawrence also accompanied us on the organ for Christus Natus Est by Cecilia McDowall which was a bouyant way to finish the concert.

The Spring Concert was a personal highlight of the year as we tackled Durufle's sublime but technically challenging Requiem. It was no mean feat and I was so grateful to the amazing choir for coming on that musical journey which culminated in a brilliant performance at St Mary's Buckland. We were very fortunate to welcome Simon Lawford on the organ who brought such richness to the work and a wonderful accompaniment for the choir that gave us all a great deal of confidence. The accomplished soloists were Sam Jardine and Dinah Loasby, sopranos, and Tim Koder, cello. Ben Beurklian Carter joined us as Baritone soloist and it was especially touching that Ben performed a beautiful sequence of songs on the theme of "light" accompanied by Terence Carter, his father, on the piano. It was a moment to remember.

We were delighted to be welcomed to Fyfield Church for the first time, to perform our summer concert. The programme featured a range of songs on the theme of "where words meet music" with the central work being George Shearing's Songs and Sonnets. This jazz number was performed brilliantly by the choir, who had put a great deal of work into learning the fabulous harmonies. We were accompanied for the first time by Roger Spikes on the piano, who gave the work a lightness and energy that perfectly matched the choir. Other items in the programme included a wistful performance of She moved through the fair by a small group of singers and a very personal premiere of Charles Henderson's beautiful Golden Sleep. It was a wonderful evening and the audience were warm and appreciative.

It is my continued privilege to lead the choir and my heartfelt thanks go to each member for giving so much in every rehearsal and pulling out all the stops in our performances! I am also very grateful indeed to the committee and especially our chairmain, Sjoerd Vogt, for all that is done to keep the choir running so smoothly behind the scenes.

*Clare
October 2025.*