

A Potted History of Frodsham & District Choral Society

1970 - 2024

January 29th 1970	60 attend a meeting at Frodsham Community Centre to discuss the possible formation of Choral Society, Beryl Gowland agrees to conduct the newly formed choir.
March 5th 1970	Inaugural AGM at the Community Centre.
December 6th 1970	The choir's 1st concert, in the Community Centre, 'Music for Christmas' conducted by the newly appointed conductor, John Bromley with accompaniment by Peter Hodgson, was a sell-out forcing a second concert to be put on at the Methodist church.
September 1971	Rehearsals now held at Overton School.
December 1973	1st performance by the choir of Handel's 'Messiah'. Soloists - Barbara Elsey, Nancie Nevitt, Brian Greensill, Alan Burrows with David Ridout on the organ. Their fees were set at £8.50, £10.00, £7.35, £10.00 and £10.00 respectively.
1974	Conductor and accompanist are now paid for their services.
June 1975	John Bromley retires as conductor, Emrys Jones is appointed as his successor.
November 1981	Charitable status attained.
1982	Barbara Price takes over from Jane Stewart as accompanist.
December 1982	County almost brought to a halt due to a snowstorm, but the Carol Concert goes ahead at the Community Centre, with an audience.
April 1984	'Elijah' by Mendelssohn with Wrexham Maelor Choir with a reference to 'Flying Soloists' in the local Wrexham Press.
September 1985	Rehearsal venue moves to Five Crosses Methodist Church.
May 1987	50th Concert - Verdi's 'Nabucco' with Rona Lowe, Margaret O'Hara, Michael Clee, Philip Ravenscroft and Robert Williams.
October 1992	Andrew Millinchip steps in to conduct the Rutter concert due to Emrys Jones' illness.
October 1995	The choir takes part Jubilee Concert of the N F M S at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral performing Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius.'
April 1996	25th year's Anniversary - Verdi's 'Nabucco' in Frodsham High School with Amanda Ballard, Susan Wright, Stephen Davis, Philip Ravenscroft and David Usher accompanied by a full orchestra led by Pat Donnelly.
October 1997	Barbara Price steps in, at very short notice, to accompany the choir in Puccini's Messa di Gloria and Elgar's The Music Makers
November 1998	Helen Everett becomes the choir's accompanist.
December 1998	Emrys' final concert with the choir, Handel's 'Messiah' with Jo Naylor, Jo Dwyer, Stephen Davis and David Usher.
March 1999	Emrys retires from the choir after 24 years and 69 concerts.
March 1999	Ken Fayle agrees to take over and he introduces warm up exercises for the voice and body. The choir learns to count up to 8 and back down again!
1999	Rehearsals held in Trinity church whilst renovations are completed at the Methodist Church.
2000	Summer concert and carol singing at Blakemere introduced into the choir's calendar. 1st annual Newsletter produced.
2001	Frodsham Golf club hosts the choir's annual dinner.

March 2001	Deputy conductor Cath Shaw conducts her first concert with the choir. Mozart and Fauré Requiem; Brian Greensill miraculously turns up at the final rehearsal, stepping in for Matthew Minter who had been taken ill.
December 2001	Carol Concert at Community Centre, Andrew Carter's 'Christmas Pudding' encore.
June 2002	Choir take part in Frodsham Jubilee Festival in Castle Park with 'MacPherson's Farewell' and other songs.
December 2002	Choir's 15th performance of 'Messiah' conducted by Cath Shaw with Ken Fayle on the organ.
March 2003	Choir hosts a 'Come and Sing' day in aid of Cancer Research UK. A great success, both financially and musically.
November 2003	100th Concert - Mendelssohn's 'Elijah' conducted by Ken Fayle. Soloists - Elaine McCrill, Kathryn Cooke, Nick Hardy, David Usher and Sebastian Fayle as the youth
April 2004	Choir's first performance of 'Carmina Burana' - a resounding success.
2004	Choir's website launched - fdcs.org.uk
September 2005	After 35 years the choir rehearsal night moves to a Monday.
November 2005	Laurie Ashworth and Tom Eaglen make their first appearance with the choir as soloists in Rutter's 'Mass of the Children'.
July 2006	Change of choir dress for the ladies, out go the white blouses to be replaced by black tops and pink scarves.
2007	Michael Wynne takes over from Helen Everett as accompanist. Lauren Hibberd replaces Michael.
July 2007	Ken Fayle stands down as conductor only to return as guest conductor in November.
December 2007	Captain Craig Burns, dressed in Royal Marines dress uniform, conducts the Carol Concert at Frodsham Methodist Church.
January 2008	Howard Kane appointed as conductor and soon thereafter introduces his reviews of our concert performances.
July 2008	Howard conducts 'Feel the Spirit' at the Methodist church to full house.
December 2008	Howard leads a superb performance of 'Messiah' with soloists from the RNCM and a chamber orchestra.
February 2009	Robert Woods appointed as accompanist.
2009	Revenue from the rehearsal sales table and the famous FDCS book sales tops £1700.
2009	Choir commissions an anthem to celebrate Frodsham 800, composed by Matt Baker with words by Cheshire's poet Laureate, Andrew Rudd.
November 2009	World première of 'Frodsham 800 - We Live Here Still'.
2010	40th anniversary year begins with 'Crowning Glories', attended by 2 former conductors, John Bromley and Emrys Jones and founder member Carole Willson. The choir now had over 100 members including nine of the founder members - Geoff Spilsbury, Barbara Mottershead, Pat Eades, Pat Caldwell, Sheila Hills, Anne Grenside, John Grenside, Gill Burn and Margaret Ogg. Choir purchases lightweight portable staging.
March 2011	133 singers attend an FDCS Come and Sing Fauré's 'Requiem' and Karl Jenkins' 'The Armed Man' (choral suite).
August 2011	Robert's Summer Workshop introduced - a group of singers taken to Liverpool Cathedral to sing the morning services.
October 2011	The choir masters Church Slavonic in a performance of Rachmaninov's 'Vespers' with the St Petersburg choir, Voskresenije.
March 2012	The Olympic games comes to Chester with choir members joining hundreds of singers to perform Matt Baker's 'Across the World' in the Roman Amphitheatre.
November 2012	Choir perform the world première of Bob Chilcott's 'Advent Candle', which the choir commissioned with other NW Choirs.
April 2013	Semi-staged performance of Mendelssohn's 'Elijah' is a great success with soloists Helen Massey, Louise Jones, Jonathan Cooke and Terence Ayebare in the title role.

April 2014	The Oscars come to FDCS with Allegra Giagu, who was a featured artist in the Oscar nominated soundtrack to the film Anna Karenina, joining John Cunningham, Hanna-Liisa Midwood, Jonathan Cooke and the choir in the 'Magic of Mozart', which was the first in a series of concerts, featuring a Requiem, to commemorate World War 1.
March 2014	Singers from across the region 'Sing for their hearts' in a Come and Sing 'We ♥ Haydn, organised by the choir which raises £769 for Heart Research UK
April 2015	'Lest We Forget', the choir gives an emotional tribute to their relatives who lived and died in the First World War with local violinist, Daniel Axworthy. Frodsham Players add their tribute by performing an extract from 'Journey's End'
February 2016	The choir takes part in the first Frodsham Singathon organised by Frodsham Community centre to showcase the talents of the people from around Frodsham.
December 2016	The choir gives its first performance of Benjamin Britten's 'Saint Nicolas' with a superb performance by Jonathan Cooke in the title role.
January 2017	Fauré's Requiem tops the list of members favourite choral work performed under the direction of Howard Kane, closely followed by Handel's 'Messiah', though not all Handel's works were popular with his 'Birthday Ode to Queen Anne' coming bottom of the list.
December 2017	The talented young players from Vale Royal Concert Band join the choir for the choir's Christmas concert which featured a selection of traditional carols and a new take on several old favourites including a humorous and sarcastic rendition of 'The Twelve days after Christmas'.
March 2018	Our final concert in our WW1 requiem series 'A Song of Thanksgiving' received critical acclaim in the Church Times. Roderick Dunnett came particularly to hear 2 little performed works, Vaughan Williams' 'A Song of Thanksgiving' and Arthur Sullivan's 'Te Deum'. Robert, Howard and Lynne Rogers all came in for praise, as did the choir, we were a 'spirited well driven choir who could sing exquisitely'.
July 2018	There wasn't a dry eye in the house when Nicholas Sales and Matt Kellett sang Bizet's 'The Pearl Fishers' duet in 'A Night at the Opera'.
November 2019	The choir showed they could swing, singing Chilcott's 'Little Jazz Mass', 'Requiem' and 'Jazz Songs of Innocence'.
March 2020	50th anniversary concert (Mozart's Requiem and Haydn's Nelson Mass) cancelled due to lockdown; it would have been the choir's 176th performance; Howard's 58th and Robert's 48th concert.
April 20-Sept.21	Lock-down Monday night zoom sessions - quizzes, singalongs and chats help keep spirits up and singers engaged with the choir. Committee meetings and AGM held via Zoom.
June 2021	Outdoor singing sessions in Alison and Mike Gann's Garden
October 2021	Socially distanced, well-ventilated and disinfected rehearsals held at Frodsham Methodist church hall.
March 2022	Informal performance in St Laurence's: 'Stainer's Crucifixion' raising £345 for the DEC Ukrainian appeal
July 2022	First proper concert post lock-down - Who is Silvia? Robert shows his versatility as an accompanist, percussionist, conductor and soloist.
November 2022	Concert dedicated to our founder members and, in particular, to those who have sung with the choir for 50 years - Barbara Mottershead, Geoff Spilsbury, Pat Caldwell, Pat Eades and Sheila Hills
May 2023	Love, life and loss – a wonderful concert dedicated to Rosalind Cundy and friends we have lost featuring Brahms Requiem and music by Brahms and Schumann. Andrew Millinchip's first concert with the choir as our accompanist. Soloists - Terence Ayebare and Barbara Ruzsics accompanied by the chamber orchestra Concordia.
April 2024	A Come and Sing day led by Bob Chilcott is a resounding success attracting 120 singers.