

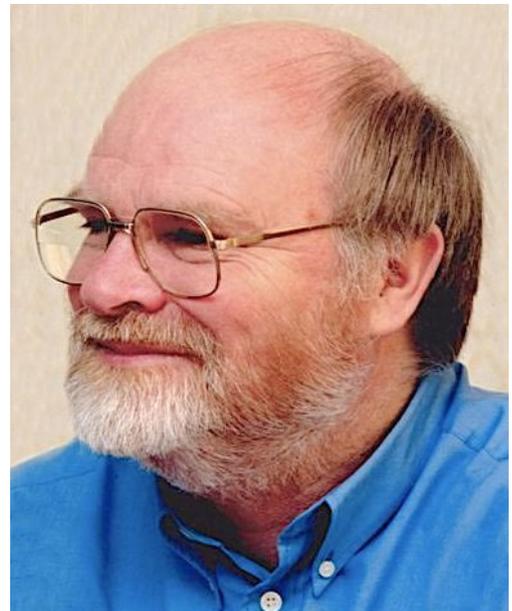
## COMMUNITY NEWS - Tuesday 7th September 2021

### IPSWICH ARTS ASSOCIATION with CHRIS GREEN

After eighteen months of silence, many performing arts groups are returning to meeting, but it is not without its challenges as I have experienced. Hours of discussion over the past weeks over health and safety, developing protocols and other related matters seems to be the order of the day. Of course, the smaller the performing group is, the easier it is, but those of us involved with larger ensembles face a different order of challenge. So, think of me and my colleagues tonight as members of the Trianon Choir meet for the first time since January 2020, and the players of Trianon's Orchestra tomorrow night. We are not the only groups meeting for the first time this week, and my best wishes go out to the many other ensembles.

What we have experienced pales into relative insignificance when compared with what musicians are facing in Afghanistan. The stories that are seeping out about the persecution of musicians- especially youngsters- is chilling. Music has played such an important role in Afghani culture over the past twenty years, that the current turn of events is so disturbing.

I have been conducting now for just over sixty years. Yes, I know, some will say that it shows and my beat has probably got slower. I am still learning and have benefited from contact with other conductors. One colleague with whom I have worked on many occasions is Patrick McCarthy. Patrick has variously been teacher, conductor and soloist. For many years he has conducted choirs in the North Essex and Suffolk area, and now I have heard that he has taken the decision to retire from his post as Conductor of the Ipswich Bach Choir at the end of this coming singing year. Patrick has been with this ensemble for at least 20 years, and both he and the Ipswich Bach Choir shall be very sorry to part company. I understand that Patrick's eyesight has proved challenging, and so he has made this decision now.



*Patrick McCarthy, conductor.  
Credit; Patrick Mccarthy.*

That leaves the Ipswich Bach Choir needing to find a new Musical Director “Succession planning” can be exciting and yet frustrating at times, though the Choir has a year in which to appoint a successor. So do watch this space as they decide on the process of appointment.



*Sir Andrew Davies, conductor.*

The BBC Symphony Orchestra has had some fine conductors during the post-war years, but for my money one of the best has been Sir Andrew Davis. A firm favourite at the Proms (I seem to recall him delivering the Last Night “speech” with a witty parody of a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song). Davis also has fronted up many fine recordings and has been a “house conductor” for Chandos Records. Amongst recordings released by this Colchester-based company I renewed my acquaintance of an all-Delius programme released ten years ago with Sir Andrew conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Delius’s languid and beautiful *Appalachia*, in which the composer takes a slave song as inspiration and treats it to a series of variations lasting over 35 minutes (Chandos CHSA 5089). The companion piece draws upon the composer’s discovery and then subsequent love affair with Norway. There he met and was mentored by Grieg. Amongst the pieces inspired by Delius’s affection for Norway was *The Song of the high Hills* for chorus and orchestra, and this gets a wonderfully measured performance from Davis and the BBC musicians.

Libraries play such an important role in local communities, and they have inspired author Sophie Green to write one of her children’s books. She is the guest speaker at the Ipswich Town Lecture on Thursday at Museum Street Methodist Church, Blackhorse Lane at 1pm. The series of Ipswich Town Concerts and Lectures is 21 years old this year and remain free, but with a retiring collection. So please go along to hear Sophie’s 50-minute session (which includes questions and answers).

Ipswich Arts Association is also still collecting material for the 2021 *Arts in Celebration* which will go up on its website from 27 September. Meanwhile, you can enjoy a fresh poem and painting every fortnight. Until 19 September the featured poem is *Last orders* by Ivor Murrell.

Like so many creative people, Ivor's background was as a working life, with experience as a maintenance engineer, a sugar industry trouble shooter, a maltster and finally as Director General of the Maltsters Association of Great Britain. As Suffolk's last traditional floor maltster he gave an IAA Town Lecture on the subject in March 2019. Since retirement he has achieved



*Ivor Murrell. Credit: Ivor Murrell.*

an honours degree with the Open University and has become Chairperson of The Arts Society East Suffolk. 'Last Orders' won a 'Commended' award in the 2016 George Crabbe Poetry Competition. The competition judge, Moniza Alvi, wrote of *Last Orders*, "Tragic and hard hitting, I found this poignant poem compelling. This is a poem with a real sense of urgency".

If you have a story to share with other organisations, please email IAA chairperson, Professor Chris Green at: [cjc.green@talktalk.net](mailto:cjc.green@talktalk.net)

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