

Issue 5

OCTOBER 2022

Cantemus News

L e t u s s i n g !

Oliver's Journey Home



**We got him home in style....
and now we look forward to next year!**

Unitarian Music Society



www.unitarianmusic.org.uk



Greetings and thanks to UMS

The performance of Oliver's journey Home at Ilkley was joyous. I am sure that David would have been impressed. My local friends thanked me for inviting them and were surprised that you had come from far and wide to take part.

For me it was good to see so many old friends. I was sorry that I could not get round to chat with everyone and relieved that my brother was there to provide a handkerchief when you sang '*Thank you for the Music*'.

I had watched David absorbed by the challenge of setting Nick's libretto to music and then work out how to tackle the orchestration. It brought together all the skills he had developed over the years of working with choirs and orchestras of all ages. It was a task that he enjoyed.

Thank-you to all the people who enabled Oliver to make his journey home.

Christine



Chairman's Report

I first met my American friend, Terry Nadler, nearly fifty years ago when we were teaching at a school in Sussex. We share a birthday, which is one reason we have kept in touch over the years. Although we don't meet anymore, we correspond all the time so of course I shared with him the film of "Oliver's Journey Home". I thought you might be interested in some of his comments:

'Bringing together the orchestra members, choral director and chorus to rehearse. Such an endeavor!

I loved how involved the chorus members and the musicians were. The video captures that very well!

While amateurs, they all put their heart and soul into it!

I especially noticed the woman in the back row who was continually smiling and enjoying the good time provided by the soloists and the music!

What a character!

Thanks for including the synopsis. Very helpful.

The sound production was great for the soloists, but the chorus singing was hard for me to follow.

I really couldn't make out much of the words that they were singing.

The video was shot on the pavement outside York Minster, I'll guess. That took a bit of doing, I'm sure! And having those videos incorporated into the whole production was fabulous, but must have been a challenge to insert and play in the right spots on the day of the performance!

Yes, it was a great success, even if there was limited rehearsal !

The chorus was so joyous! It added a great "lift" to the performance.

Not having much time to rehearse, they were very attentive to the score and managed some smiles once in a while.

Hugh with his VERY LONG hair! While I watched the video, I was wondering how does he deal with it, day in, and day out!'

I think that says it all, really. Whether or not "Oliver's Journey Home" ever sees the light of day again or not, the main thing is that we did it, and it was a very proud moment for me when Marcie put down her baton for the final time, and we took our bows. Many thanks, everyone, for fulfilling my wishes – I feel really indulged, and whatever you decide to do next year, I shall do my best to fulfil your wishes in return!

Nick Morrice



From a Bridlington Fish & Chip shop to York Minster and back again.....

WHAT A JOURNEY!



There are some events in life which we know we will never forget. Being a part of our tribute to David Dawson - '**Oliver's Journey Home**' - is such a memory for me.

I was a bit worried that rehearsal time for the chorus was somewhat limited, but when the orchestra began to play and we launched into scene one in front of a warm, expectant audience....it felt so good. So many people brought their energies and talents together to make this special performance a success.

Nick's witty libretto was the starting point. David embraced it and brought it to life, musically. Perhaps not everyone realises that Marcie, our Musical Director actually completed David's unfinished manuscript. Stepping into David's shoes as Musical Director for the show was no easy task. My admiration for her talents knows no end!

Our soloists, Helen and Richard...Myrna and Gary.... and the four tutors all performed beautifully. A special mention must go to our rising star, Hugh who charmed everyone with his singing and acting abilities. What a find! I hope we will see him again next year. Josh was a cracking jazz pianist at 'York Minster'.The combined talents of the UMS orchestra and the Ilkley New Horizons Orchestra did us proud and a special credit must go to Jo Richardson, leading violinist. Then there was the video film team - Colin, Kevin, John H, Joan, Bronwyn and our editor John W - who captured our performance for posterity.

I am sure I speak for all of us when I say that it was moving and emotional to see these lovely pictures of David on the screen at the end as company and audience sang '*Thank you for the music*'.

UMS Conference 2022 was memorable in other ways too, for workshops, informal concert, Chapel service and above all, a long-awaited reunion of good friends after such a long and difficult time during the Pandemic. Behind the scenes, the UMS Sub Organising Group - Elizabeth, Isabelle, Elly, Esther, Jo and Lyanne had worked hard over the 2 year break to collaborate by Zoom to create virtual events and the 2022 Conference programme.

I know some of us really believed that without our exceptionally gifted late President David Dawson, UMS would not survive. I can't tell you how happy and relieved I am that this is not the case. We are already planning next year's theme. We are alive and kicking and keen to find and welcome new members to our ranks.

.....and finally, wouldn't it be wonderful if Oliver further develops his cycling legs and keeps on travelling!

Lyanne Mitchell

(if you would like a set of prints of the OJH scenes as a souvenir, please let me know.)



First of all, I'd like to say how wonderful it was to be with you all at the UMS conference! Truly a fantastic "wiedersehen"! I have missed everyone so much, and all the music we make.

Then i'd like to say a mega-big thank you to everyone who was involved with "Oliver's Journey Home": chorus, soloists, instrumentalists, artists, audio and visual techies, as well as our conference organisers, who made it all possible. it was a big undertaking, with so much to do in so little time, but I think we did a marvellous job, especially in such brutal heat, which would have wilted a less enthusiastic and dedicated group.

Special thanks to Nick for all his work, and for finding our Oliver, Hugh, who was phenomenal!

Everyone worked hard for this production, and we made our dream--and David's--come true. standing up in front of you I saw the joy on people's faces, and could feel the excitement....we have something really good going at UMS.

So, what does the future hold for UMS? Let's keep up the hard work and enjoy the marvellous company and music.

Register early for next summer's conference!

The choir I sing in here has started up again, after 2 and a half years of silence. oh, bliss! making music, especially in a group, is so good for one's soul.

Where ever you are, make music, and make joy!

Marcie



I thoroughly enjoyed singing together in Oliver's Journey Home in August at the UMS Conference, it was great performing in Ilkley.

I have been busy singing in my local Yarm choir. In July we gave a concert at Yarm Parish Church (St Mary's) proceeds going towards the repairing of their church organ.

I am now enjoying rehearsing to sing Evensong at Ripon Cathedral in November, where we will be singing Preces, Responses, Psalm 28, Stanford's Magnificat and Nunc dimittis, and Howells 'Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks'. I am looking forward to singing these, although the theology of them does not fit easily with me.

Then we will be singing in two Christmas concerts in December at Yarm School Princess Alexander Auditorium.

Otherwise I am kept very busy being Secretary of Stockton Unitarian Church, UMS and Unitarian Women's Group, leading and helping organise Sunday services, playing for services once a month. Working on modules for the Worship Studies Course. Also attending Knit 'n' Natter once a fortnight at church, weekly meetings of Age UK Teesside, Bingo at the Meadowings Community Centre and weekly chair-based exercises.

Most weekends my Grandson (aged 14) stays with me. I am also enjoying watching Strictly Come Dancing on a Saturday evening.

Your very busy UMS Secretary Margaret R



During the long weekend of 12 - 15 August 2022, I had a really fantastic time at the Unitarian Music Society Conference at the Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow.

It was my first time and I would very much recommend it.

Everyone was so friendly and so enthusiastic and because we were all making music together and had a common cause, it was very easy for a newcomer to "belong" right from the start.

The weekend mainly revolved round rehearsals for and a performance of Oliver's Journey Home. This was a lively musical account of a young lad called Oliver from his parents chip shop in "Bridlington on Sea", who went from chips to stunning violin performances in three acts of a lively libretto by Nick Morrice and beautiful music by David Dawson. The whole weekend was in effect a tribute to David Dawson whose legacy could be felt guiding us through every session and at the Sunday early evening performance itself in the Clark-Foley Centre in Ilkley.

The participants were a cast of soloists from the Music Society, headed by a sixteen year old guest star Hugh Ameigh playing Oliver, the chorus from the Music Society, plus players from the Music Society and the Ilkley New Horizon Orchestra.

Most of us had done some practice at home before the conference. This helped enable rehearsals to pitch in on Friday evening and parts of Saturday and Sunday, more to pull everything together than to start from scratch. At first it all felt a little disjointed but it was amazing how everyone picked things up, particularly in our rehearsal sessions with the full orchestra in the Clark Foley Centre itself. We had a wonderful conductor - Marcia - a truly hardworking orchestra - and a really enthusiastic bunch of singers. We all dressed up in black with coloured scarves and this gave a very professional looking touch to the performance.

Hucklow is always a marvellous setting for any conference but we also got the "Trip Out" to Ilkley which made a super scenic extra and to the Clark Foley centre itself was so welcoming, well equipped and supportive. We had a goodly audience of Unitarians and friends and visitors for the performance. The performance was successful and much appreciated and there were some moving speeches afterwards, after which everyone pitched into a well deserved buffet tea.

On a practical note, I would also like to pay tribute to our coach driver who got us there and back, it was an over two hour journey each way and much of it seemed to be through endless motorways in urban Leeds.

We did not exclusively devote ourselves to Oliver's Journey Home however. Other musical and social activities took place at Hucklow on the Saturday afternoon, including a quiz. I particularly liked sitting in on the recorder group session. I never knew there were so many sizes and pitches of recorders. On the Saturday evening, I also really enjoyed the "party piece" show by various members of the Society.

On the spiritual side there were good evening Epilogues on the Friday and Saturday evenings and a service by Ed Fordham at the Great Hucklow Chapel on Monday morning. I really appreciated having the extra morning on Monday at the Nightingale Centre, this made the weekend feel less rushed and more complete.

I would very much like to say how much I appreciated this weekend and all the work of the organizers who put it together such as Nick Morrice who cheerfully and effectively managed the whole weekend and Margaret Robinson who provided such a lot of useful information beforehand.

I am very much looking forward to the UMS conference in 2023.

Lesley Harris

NEW HYMNS and SONGS PROJECT from UNI-SING!



Looking ahead to Spring 2023, Louise Rogers and I are planning at least one session introducing and singing new hymns/songs, due to the wonderful creativity of some of our members and friends. Already, we have a dozen potential hymns; many of these have been included already in congregations and on zoom at UNI-SING! There's a good overlap between UMS and Uni-Sing membership, including Louise and I.

We are looking for words to known tunes, OR words and music, OR bear in mind that I'm willing to set others' writings to music where possible. We will be inviting composers and lyricists of recent hymns to speak or write about them. Reminder: The Dorothy Archer competition is open for hymns on the theme of 'My own space', until the end of October. Details already sent by Margaret Robinson.

Let's get this rolling!

Myrna Michell

Silver Lining



I hope everyone enjoyed the YouTube Oliver recording as much as I did. I was so impressed! Playing in the orchestra, on stage, meant I missed most of what was going on in front, but I was blown away by what we achieved in two short days - especially with quite a number of regular attendees not having attended the conference.

Whilst reflecting on this, it occurred to me that every cloud really does have a silver lining. Had David Dawson not so sadly passed away, we would have done the performance amongst ourselves, quite probably with one of us taking the Oliver part.

In the event, a young man had a fantastic opportunity to sing in public (extremely successfully - and who knows where that may lead!) and, we heard, as a result of a conversation with Nick, OJH might even be turned into a regular musical - hopefully with its Unitarian origin mentioned.

If that isn't a silver lining, I don't know what is!





John Smith

Tenor and Banjo Player

12 October 1942 – 16 May 2022

I am sad to tell UMS friends who met him over the last several years that John Smith has died after struggling with indifferent health for some time.

I had know John all my life; his grandmother was our next-door neighbour so he and his brothers and sister spent many holidays at her home and my brother and I were always included in their activities, and what adventures we had in those relaxed 1940s and 1950s.

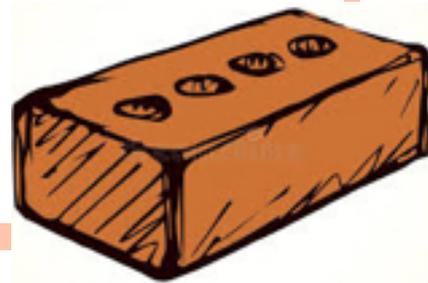
The nearest to me in age, and the one who shared my love of classical music, from college days through to old age, we had met for concerts over the last sixty years - first at The Royal Festival Hall in London and latterly at Symphony Hall Birmingham – our last CBSO matinée was in February 2020, the remaining concerts for that season were of course cancelled because of 'lockdown'.

After his wife Chris died I suggested that John (a URC attender and choir member) might enjoy the UMS summer conference. What a success that was; he immediately felt 'at home' with us religious liberals and I am sure the tenors were happy to include another in their number. John threw himself fully into all our activities, even taking part in the informal Saturday evening 'Entertainment' – you may remember him playing his banjo or singing 'The Gendarme Song' with Ken Smith!

I know he always anticipated with pleasure those long week-ends each August. Thank you for including and befriending him.

Valerie Walker

A Brick under the Piano - and other musical challenges



Most of us non-famous pianists put up with weird situations, from impossible pianos to societies who don't recognise how much the accompanist has to learn - and then forget to mention us. And being paid is a rarity. After a solo concert once, handed a £20 note, I was assured that "it isn't much but doing these concerts keeps your name circulating..." And I thought "yes, to do more free concerts: this covers the purchase of the music."

Today I attended a piano recital where I noticed the pianist wearing shoes with substantial solid heels. My gaze shifted slightly to the sustaining pedal (the loud pedal!). It was very high off the ground. When a church runs a weekly classical recital, they want the piano to move with ease so, often the three piano legs sit upon a whole bank of wheels in a cross formation, the piano structure made rigid by crossbars in a triangle. You've seen them, I'm sure. I'm sure it makes swivelling the piano around as easy as circling a spoon around a cup of tea. But to play it, the pianist acquired special shoes...

This inaccessible pedal took me back to around 1978 when I was mum of pre-school kids and struggling to be active musically. We lived near Maidstone in Kent. I don't recall how it came about but I was befriended by a young man who played recorders. Mark declared himself to be manic-depressive (his terminology) but nevertheless had the confidence to take on a humble sort of concert at a local church. He invited me to share it. It was notable that the priest was called Rev. Challis! They also light chalices, you know!

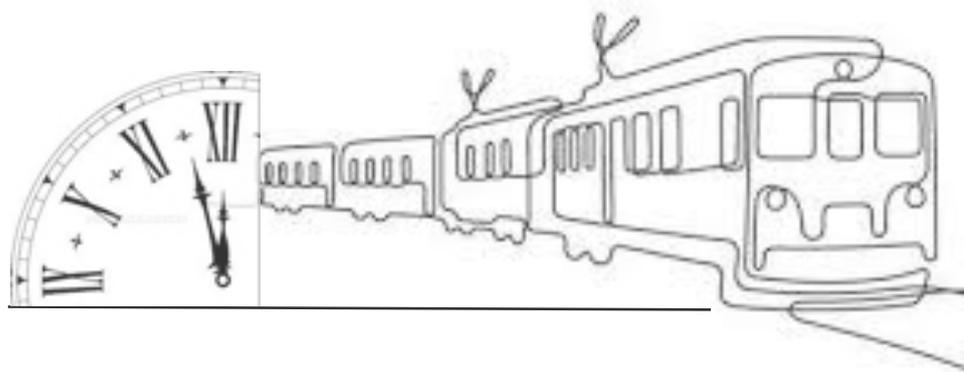
We had practised a few pieces for recorder and piano, and I selected solo Bach to go in the middle. At the church I was introduced to an old upright piano which was on large high wheels making pedal access impossible without floating my legs above the floor and developing the shakes. This was the point when the brick was introduced and was placed under my right foot. Now it was too high but what the heck. On the concert day, somehow, I was scarcely nervous at all. "What do they expect from such a noddy set-up?" I thought. As a good accompanist does, calmly I glanced to my soloist prior to playing his introduction, to find Mark's face frozen in terror. Remember in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* when they find the body on the ground?! "*Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic HOUND!*"). With Mark's terror, I don't know how we got through. Rev. Challis thanked us afterwards in a voice characteristic of an Anglican churchman called Challis...

The next experience was also in Kent and this time someone invited me to play an inaugural piano recital on a John Brinsmead grand they had just acquired. Brinsmead was a good old English piano manufacturer. The organisation was an agricultural research station at East Malling, in a former ‘grand house’ with its own hall complete with gilt-framed pictures around the walls. Hence, concerts for employees and friends had been started. I still recall playing that evening a Beethoven sonata, a suite of Schumann pieces and in the second half, a piano transcription of Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker Suite*. Afterwards, the thank-yous included being awarded a five-pound note and a plastic bag of baking apples. Being simply glad of the opportunity to play, anything else was a bonus!

The last tale also happened in Kent and at the time we were preparing a move to Cambridge. My mum-in-law, Polish by birth, had already moved into a ground-floor flat in the middle of the city. We were visiting her one day when she announced “zer is a singer who lives in ze flat above. She is a Japanese soprano, very nice. I hear her practising and she has a piano.” Well, I knocked on her door, bowed lightly and introduced myself in basic English, just in case.... Yoshiko and I then formed my first professional duo and performed a few recitals where I learnt a great deal about the accompaniment of lieder. She had been a student in Tokyo and Vienna.

Once my family moved to Cambridge, I still had contact with a church in Headcorn, Kent; Yoshiko and I agreed to drive down for an evening concert. Upon their insistence that their audience was not very experienced and they *really must have a lot of variety*, we didn’t push our luck, performing one song by this composer and one by that... We recorded the concert and occasionally I place such old cassettes into the player and listen to them for old time’s sake. The audience was attentive and didn’t cough too much, but at one point, a train roared right by the church (the old reassuring *terdum terDUM*) which went on for ages; everyone waited, smiling. And as we closed the evening with traditional Japanese songs, the church clock gave us our cue to stop - slowly and solemnly striking the hour.

Hearing the recording nowadays, the effect is slightly haunting. The old clock was telling us the time but now it takes me back to another time and place. I still don’t really know where Headcorn is, but afterwards through dark lanes we set off back to Cambridge, a young duo happy to do our stuff – paid or not.



Myrna Michell

Eshet az eső, hullhat a hó, Lelkes körünkben mindig jó.
 Could it be rain or could it be snow, In every weather it's good to know;

Mig a szívünkben dal fakad, Mindig süt a nap.
 'Round our circle this song will run - Ever shines the sun.

Mindig süt a nap!

Eshet az eső, hullhat a hó:
 Lelkes körünkben mindig jó.
 Mig a szívünkben dal fakad,
 mindig süt a nap!

Ősz jöhet ránk és verhet a tél.
 Tiszta szívünkbe a nyár belefér.
 Itt aki jót vet, jót is arat
 s mindig süt a nap.

Lelkes körünk, te boldog világ.
 Jöjj velünk s jött az életen át -
 Mig a te fényed megmarad:
 MINDIG SÜT A NAP!

Music, words, painting
Nagy Ferenc
Unitarian Minister, Transylvania)

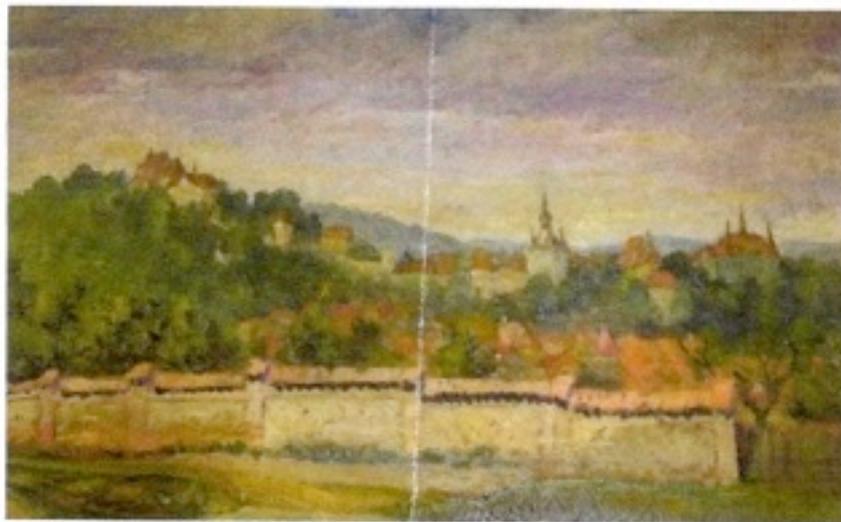
Ever shines the sun!

Could it be rain or could it be snow,
 In every weather it's good to know:
 'Round our circle this song will run -
 Ever shines the sun!

Be it chilly autumn or winter storm,
 In all pure hearts a spring is born,
 from tiny seeds great things will come -
 Ever shines the sun!

Widen the circle everywhere,
 So all the world our love may share,
 Till in our hearts this song will run -
 Ever shines the sun!

In Oxford and everywhere
 Let's make all hearts in love to share -
 That is the best that can be done -
 EVER SHINES THE SUN!



Peter writes -

A young woman came into the college chapel at Harris Manchester College and told me her grandfather Nagy Ferenc had spent a year in Oxford during the late 1960's or early 1970's. She gave me a copy of a song which he had written and on the page is a painting of his.

On Sunday 25th September, I am leading

the Oxford service and it's mainly based on the music and thought of Ralph Vaughan Williams. His father was an Anglican vicar who died when RVW was only two years old but his mother was from the Darwin / Wedgwood Unitarian stock and RVW described himself as "a cheerful agnostic".

(Note from Editor - I have done my best to scan and retype this from a faded original.)

Contributed by Peter Hewis

... And Finally ...

A huge *thank you* to everyone who has contributed to this issue. Your participation is much appreciated.

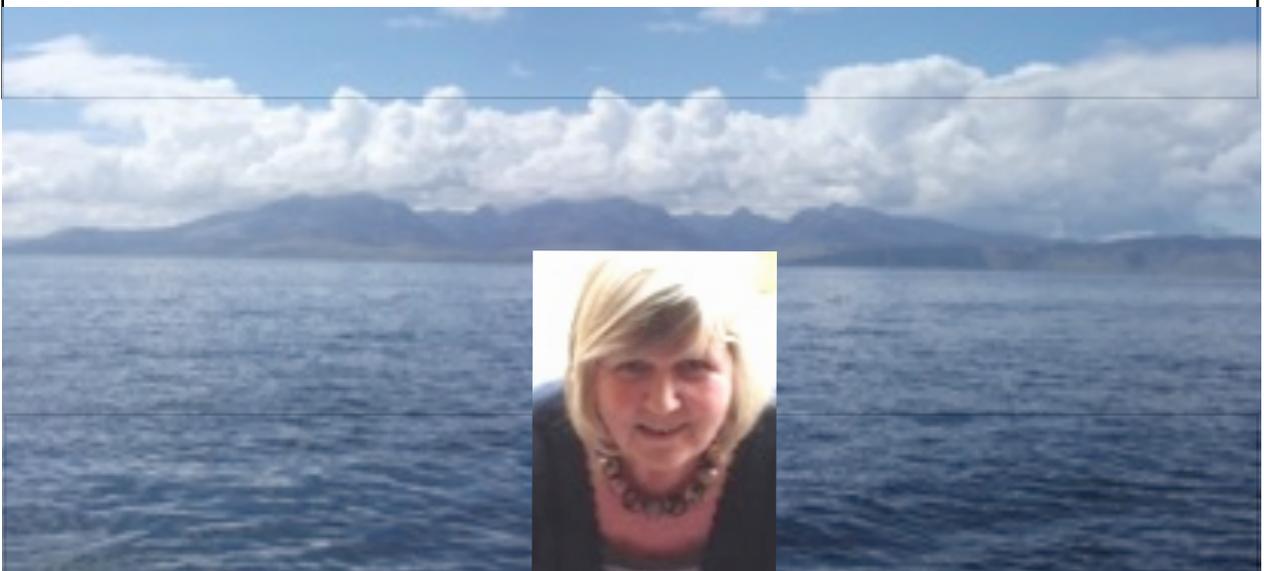
The next Issue of *Cantemus News* will come out in the early Spring of 2023

The UMS sub organising group has begun zoom meetings - planning ideas for our Summer Conference
11th - 14th August 2023.

A poster is on the way which I hope will encourage some new attenders to join us.

Please send contributions for issue 6 of *Cantemus News* to -
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or post to 49 Mount Stuart Road, Rothesay,
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Best wishes, Lyanne
Cantemus News - *Editor / Designer*