

HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR

Newsletter Summer 2025

Time for a round up of choir activities since the beginning of the year. Several events and activities are highlighted below as we continued to entertain many. Once again, we helped to raise funds for a variety of worthy causes and particularly for the Royal National Lifeboat Institute on our visit to Poole.

7th March: Beaconsfield Festival 2025



We had not appeared outside the borough for some time so at the suggestion of former chairman, Derek Mellor, we joined in the Beaconsfield choral festival which highlighted every choir in Buckinghamshire as well as a few interlopers such as us.

Ace reporter Richard Hope-Smith reported “ Friends, one being an ambassador for another choir, who were there said that over 1000 singers took part in the festival. They rated our song selection , performance, and appearance first class with our rendition of “ Saints” excellent.”

10th May: V.E. Day Celebration at Bentley Priory

On a glorious summer's day, the choir entertained the many visitors to the Bentley Priory Museum, which was of course the Headquarters of RAF Fighter Command.



Although there was no fly past on the day of our concert, the country's VE Day celebrations a few days later featured Lancaster Bomber PA474 flying over the museum (and indeed the Chairman's back garden in Hatch End from where this grainy picture was taken).

“Commander” Mike Gibson provides the following fascinating history of this actual aeroplane. “The Avro Lancaster is the most famous and successful RAF Bomber of WW2. It first came into service in October 1941. PA474 is one of only two Lancaster aircraft remaining in airworthy condition out of the 7,377 that were built [the other is in Canada].It is now part of The Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Memorial Flight which operates out of RAF Coningsbury in Lincolnshire.”

1st June: St Anselm's Church, Hatch End

We gave our annual summer concert in further support of the church restoration fund. A very full church audience gave us an enthusiastic reception, and the retiring collection raised over £1,000 towards keeping the walls intact.



We were as usual supported by Father David who gave two superb solos. This year we were delighted to give the opportunity to talented young organist, Ethan Ghosh, to play two solo items on the recently restored magnificent Willis organ. Ethan was playing at Westminster Abbey later in the week so his amazing talent was a joy to hear by everyone at St Anselm's.

Choir Tour to Poole: A Harmonious Weekend for a Worthy Cause



Our choir's trip to Poole on June 21-22, 2025, was a memorable blend of music and support for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Twenty choristers took part and we performed three times in two days.



21st June: Parkstone Yacht Club



On Saturday evening, we performed at the picturesque Parkstone Yacht Club, overlooking Poole Harbour as the sun set over the yachts and sea.





The packed venue enjoyed a stellar performance, including a wonderful performance by Hilary Pearce, ably accompanied by Avis Gerry.

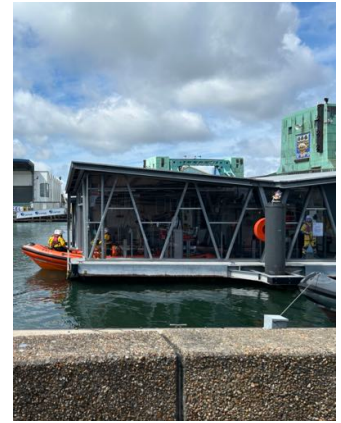
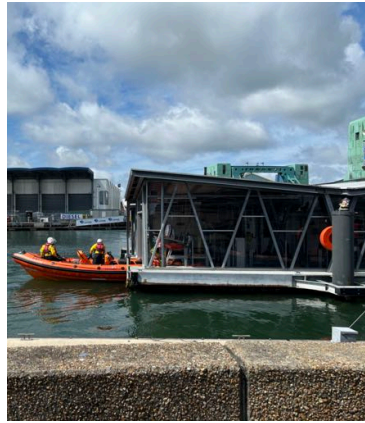


The evening raised
£1,149.75 for the
RNLI...



...a new record for
Harrow Apollo.

22st June: Guided Tour Of Poole RNLI Station



Sunday's guided tour of Poole RNLI Station turned into an impromptu performance of 'The Wellerman' inside the boathouse between "shouts" with conductor stood on an RNLI boat and Gus Nabney channelling his inner salty sea-dog with an excellent rendition.



New Poole Coxswain Phil Southgate enjoys conducting from his lifeboat.

We then performed a midday concert outside the Custom House on the Quay, raising another £134.



The weekend ended with lunch at Da Vinci's.



Big thank you to Jerry Parker for arranging accommodation, transport, logistics and much else besides; and to Hilary Pearce, Chris Drew and Avis Gerry for making everything possible.

6 July: Party In The Park - aka Singing in the rain.



You could not make it up – in a Summer of heatwaves and drought Apollo's first outdoor appearance for many years was met with a tremendous thunderstorm. At precisely 2pm at the start of our concert at the Harrow Recreation Ground raindrops were really falling on our heads and indeed our new waistcoats.



Despite the rain the show went on and Apollo entertained a good audience sheltering in a nearby tent. We were joined by the Harrow Community Gospel Choir who sang some splendid African songs. It all went swimmingly [sic], and we have been invited back for 2026 when hopefully weather conditions will be better.

15th July The Summer Social Event

Many thanks to Roz Heasman for organizing the catering and Rod Nicholas for lending us Harrow rugby club for the night and pulling the pints. Stephen and Gloria Sweden took on their traditional roles of impresarios' and comperes of a night of wonderful entertainment.



A good number of talented choristers took to the stage including David Kelly, Jamie Reigal



Eric + Chi-Man, some threatening pirates and of course the much loved cruise liner crooner himself Ashley Duego. All brilliant performances as were the others who appeared and contributed to a marvellous evening.



Not to be outdone all the non- soloist "Saints" were at the bar for a rousing finale.

Choir Uniforms.

Since the choir began there have been many uniform changes.



1940s



1950s



1960s



1970s



1980s



1990s

The Great Waistcoat Saga.



At the beginning of this century the choir sported waistcoats surely modelled on those worn by George Melly and John Chiltern & the Footwarmers or designed by the kit suppliers to Crystal Palace FC.



But for the last 15 years we have debated whether to change the uniforms...



And here it is!



But seriously with special thanks to Phil, Jerry, Tony, Mike, Gus and Steven we decided to change only the waistcoats.



.....And finally (with apologies to Mick Jagger) in 2025 no colours any more we want it painted white !



Suits you Sir



It would be remiss of me not to mention a recent notable change in the management of the choir. After serving as Honorary Secretary since 1982 Roz Heasman retired at this year's AGM in May.



Words cannot adequately express the thanks of many generations of choristers to the fantastic service given by Roz. Her organisational skills in issuing agendas, faithfully recording the minutes of endless Executive meetings - about 175 of them! - keeping chorister records and much more will be greatly missed. She has been an ever-present supporter of all our concerts and tours and, of course, our recently retired MD. So, thank you Roz for such an incredible contribution to the continued success of our choir.



Here is Roz trying to escape from her duties some while ago and enjoy a holiday.



Sadly, we are also saying farewell this Summer to two of our longest serving choristers, Steve Breed (second tenor) and Jim Bolger (baritone). They have both been part of the line up for nearly two decades. Steve with his wife Nikki made it for his last appearance on the choir tour to Poole. Steve enlivened many a BBQ evening with his guitar solos. Jim can be seen here at his last choir event on the Poole tour. We will miss Jim and again his guitar solos with his wonderful Irish songs. We send Steve, Nikki, Jim and Mary our best wishes, and hope to see them at our concerts and events in the future.

We're Walkin' On By.

No - its not Apollo practising the famous OASIS song but the workshop led by Phil Cheadle to help hone our performance skills.



Thanks to Phillipa and Phil, noted RADA trained actor Phil Cheadle was invited along to our penultimate rehearsal of the Summer to give us some sound guidance on entrances and exits, acknowledging applause and much more.

With an impressive resume boasting appearances in TV and film including Harry Potter, Coronation Street, Hollyoaks and Silent Witness, to name but a few, and an extensive theatre career performing at the Globe Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the National Theatre, not to mention his own theatre company, Two Lines Productions, Phil provided us with some excellent advice on how to face audiences and look confident and happy when singing.

So don't look back in anger I heard you say, embrace the audience and the forthcoming concert performances. Come along to our Autumn concert on 19th October and see the graceful movement of a proper choir in their new attire!

Next Apollo Events in 2025 - Chris Drew reports:

We we will be back to Bentley Priory on Saturday 13th September for their Battle of Britain Day. Our Autumn concert is on Sunday 19th October at St Alban's Church North Harrow. On Saturday 15th November we plan to have a joint concert with KAOS in Northwood, and we finish the concert year with our traditional Christmas Concert at Bentley Priory on Saturday 6th December. We will have some carol singing events and I will let you know when they are finalised.

Next year is our 85th Anniversary and we hope to plan some unique events to celebrate. I always welcome suggestions from choristers and supporters for venues to appear at and new charities to support. We were delighted to add this year the RNLI to the list of special charities supported by Apollo.

Why Not Join Apollo Choir?

Regular performances in great venues, improve your health and musical knowledge, meet interesting people, enjoy social events and have fun singing. All interested singers are welcome to any Tuesday rehearsal at 8p.m. at St Albans church hall, North Harrow.

HARROW APOLLO MALE CHOIR



Love singing? Looking for a new hobby and new friends through music?

We rehearse every Tuesday evening at 8:00pm. You're warmly invited to drop in and listen!



making music

HAMC
Harrow Apollo Male Choir

Don't Miss Our Autumn Concert!
Sunday, 19th October, at 3:00pm

Location: St. Alban's Church, The Ridgeway, North Harrow HA2 7PF
Contact: harrowapollochoir@gmail.com or 07885 466632
www.harrow-apollo-male-choir.org

No auditions. Just enthusiasm, camaraderie and a love of music!

Email: stephensweden888@gmail.com

Join us: harrow-apollo-male-choir.org

We are planning some special events this Autumn to aid recruitment. Everyone is encouraged to spread the word that singing is good for you and in particular it's fun to sing with Harrow Apollo.

Newsletter Design: Phillipa Leigh

Newsletter Editor 2025: Richard Evans.